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DARK, AMID THE BLAZE OF NOON

**Education and the Reformation: an historical analysis of
the influence of educational philosophy and practice
upon the religious character of the Protestant
Reformation, and an interpretation of the role
of education in the conservative revision
of evangelical principles following the
Peasants' Revolt**

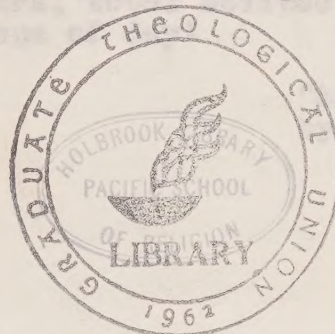
by

Wayne Ray Rood

B.S. (Salem College) 1937

B.D. (Alfred University) 1940

M.E.E. (Hartford Seminary Foundation) 1943



THESIS

**Submitted in the Department of Church History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Theology
in the
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Evangelical and the Restoration; an historical analysis of
the influence of educational philosophy and practice
upon the religious character of the Protestant
Restoration, and an interpretation of the role
of education in the contemporary revival
of evangelical principles following the
Reformation; Rev. J.

by

Wayne Ray Hood

B.A. (Central College) 1937
B.D. (Alfred University) 1940
S.M.S. (Western Kentucky University) 1942



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O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!

"Samson Agonistes"
by John Milton

PREFACE

"It requires a superior man to write history," said Martin Luther in 1538, "a man with a lion heart, who dares without fear to speak the truth." Without claim to superiority, leoninity or fearlessness, I have nevertheless attempted honestly to tell the story of educational notions and practices as an integral factor of the Protestant Reformation. Though some historians and many theologians have interpreted the Reformation otherwise, I have not discovered a story of unqualified success. It is rather an account of real people, brilliant at times and inept at others, a poignant though real series of success, heartbreak and radical alteration of principle. It is preeminently the narrative of two men, but it is also the story of countless personalities who wove their individual strands into the complicated fabric of European history: the band of teachers from whom Martin Luther learned the elements of evangelical theology, the circle of humanist scholars from whom Philip Melancthon learned his love for the ancients, and the profound influence these diverse strands wrought upon the religious character of the Reformation.

It is the conclusion of this thesis that the educational and religious factors of the Reformation developed together

through three stages.

I. THE DAWN OF THE NEW DAY.

The first period was marked by the rise of the Reformation consciousness. It was a long era of slow, painstaking and unconscious preparation of European mind and spirit for new religious insight. It culminated, after years of personal spiritual depression, in the brilliant burst of personal religious discovery by Professor Martin Luther. It was a development in which educational institutions and concepts played a trenchant role, for the Reformation was conceived, born and nurtured in the schools and universities of Europe.

II. SHADOWS AT HIGH NOON.

Early in 1522, the shadows began to gather: some men carried the evangelical principles to dangerous extremes. In 1525 the storm broke in all its fury in the Peasants' Revolt. It was a period of crisis in which human reason was discredited and the schools almost vanished.

III. ECLIPSE AMID THE BLAZE OF DAY.

After the open bloodshed and terrifying violence of the year of crisis, 1525, the basic principles of the early Reformation passed into eclipse, and the task of the evangelical leaders became a desperate effort to conserve and consolidate what had already been won. For education it was the period of theological indoctrination, and the change of religious principle was most clearly betrayed in the determination of the

church to use the schools as the major tool for achieving ecclesiastical unanimity and political security.

The Peasants' Revolt was the crisis, the fulcrum on which the total Reformation movement, aim, theology and education turned. It broke the life of Martin Luther in two, ended his career as a creative Reformer, and provided the opportunity for the emergence of Philip Melanchthon, a man suited by temperament and training for leading the movement into its confessional period. To 1525 Martin Luther had conducted himself with sufficient brilliance and argued with enough incision to change history. He accomplished this in spite of a basic inconsistency in his own thinking, a fundamental dilemma of principle which he never solved.

Everything that Martin Luther ever did bears the unmistakable marks of pressure and tension. Of his several hundred publications, not one offers a calm and systematic survey of his religious and educational ideas. Nowhere is there a clear conception of the theoretical assumptions with which he operated, or of the principles and practical ideas which formed his standards of judgment. Each time he speaks he seems to be under the tension of an immediate problem to be solved, an issue which must be met without particular reference to previous positions or possible future implications. He never seems to think his thoughts out to their very end.

At the beginning he was the creative Reformer whose mind teemed with profound religious insights: he preached and believed the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the

right of every individual to read Scripture and formulate religious belief for himself. Also from the beginning he assumed that there would be purity and unanimity of doctrine. The two demands are logically and practically exclusive: here was a paradox of desires that Luther never solved. The history of education in the Reformation period reveals that when the first principle became untenable it was abandoned for the second. The evangelical principle was in ascendancy during the first phase of the Reformation, but following the crisis of the Peasants' Revolt, the principle of authority emerged into dominance.

For two hundred years the authoritative principle prevailed; in most religious circles it still eclipses the evangelical principle of the Reformation.

Many contemporary worshipers at the shrine of the Reformation have also failed to meet the dilemma that Luther faced in 1525, and have escaped the underlying issue of the Reformation by holding securely, though perhaps unconsciously, to the later, authoritative principle. As the Second World War drew to a close in Europe, one of the neo-Reformation leaders wrote that if the Americans expected to come to Germany as teachers at the cessation of hostilities, in his estimation their effort was doomed to certain failure.

A friend is, above all, something other than a teacher. I am saying nothing against teachers; I am a teacher myself. But a teacher sits at his desk, teaches what he knows, and what his pupils do not know, sets tasks and listens, gives marks and writes

reports. A teacher simply cannot help being, in fact, in some solid measure, against his pupil, and therefore not his friend ... If the teacher wanted to be the pupil's friend, then he would have to do something very unlike a teacher: he would have to leave his desk, become the pupil's companion, and thus cease to be his teacher.¹

This kind of educational philosophy, generally characteristic of the attitude of German educators, fits clearly into the third period of the educational history of the Reformation: the period of authoritative indoctrination. The theological attitudes of many continental churchmen are quite consistent with this kind of thought. The period of eclipse is precisely where this theology finds its source, not the earlier period of incisive evangelical insight. The most influential theologians and educators of Europe and many in America have tended to meet the crisis of contemporary life in the same way in which Luther met the crisis of 1525: by embracing the authoritative principle of the eclipse and abandoning the evangelical principle of the dawn.

The way of dogmatism has been tried long enough. In 1525 the evangelical way failed largely because the world was not yet ready for its demands and opportunities. But circumstances have changed. Modern educational methods have provided religion with a base of cultural and scientific literacy hitherto unknown in the history of the world. The Protestant principle has been transferred to cultural learning.

¹Karl Barth, *The Only Way* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 92. The italics are his.

Theologians and religious educators may continue to insist upon religious indoctrination as their solution to the still unresolved dilemma that faced Martin Luther four centuries ago. Or with daring and courage they may attempt the other, earlier insight of the Reformation. If we choose the evangelical alternative we run the alleged risk that a free, informed generation will discover new insights, and formulate new statements of religious doctrine. And perhaps, if the educators and theologians of the Protestant churches were to free their minds and spirits for the operation of the original Protestant principle, the world might discover that the time has at last come for the Reformation that was dreamed and lost four hundred years ago.

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CHAPTER I

CHILD OF THE DAY

1. Martin Luther and the Schools

"For my part, if I were compelled to leave off preaching and to enter some other vocation, I knew not an office that would please me better than that of schoolmaster." This was not a carefully planned tribute to a hard-working and little appreciated profession: the words were wrung from Martin Luther's heart by the impact of an emergency, and like everything else that he wrote under pressure they laid bare his innermost, truest self.

The year was 1530, and the German Protestant Reformation had already plunged headlong into its first explosive crisis five years before. It was almost inevitable that the tensions released by Luther in Wittenberg during the winter of 1517-1518 would eventually erupt in wide-scale violence. Though he, himself, was so intimately involved in the bewildering succession of events that pyramided upon his personal break with Rome that he could not see the larger implications of his acts, even the stormy Reformer sensed the danger. The steel bands of authority had been drawn taut during the last generation by an imperial church that felt its power ebbing and by little nations and racial

lords who feared for their own security. Peasants were gathering throughout Germany and some were already marching in the Black Forest. Age-old tensions were about to be released in the summer of 1525 with disintegrating violence.

It is significant that the schools were an intrinsic element in this religious, social and economic crisis. Martin Luther had accomplished more than any other single person in freeing every man to think his own thoughts, determine his own decisions and face his own God. But centuries of intellectual restriction and spiritual control had not prepared men to be autonomous, either in mind or spirit. It was an educational problem that faced the Reformation. Radical spirits intoxicated themselves with freedom. They merely extended the logic of the Reformation to its extreme, but anarchy, not responsible religion, was their aim.

Martin Luther was, above all, a practical man in his younger years as leader of the Reformation. It had become very clear to Luther that mere logic no longer was the most important thing: people must be prepared, gradually and painstakingly if need be, for the overwhelming responsibilities which he had so suddenly opened to them. The storm clouds of revolt were too frequently mingled with the smoke from burning schools and monasteries. The people must be taught the principles of the Reformation, and that quickly.

With Luther conviction was synonymous with action. He poured his heart into a public letter of appeal to the

mayors and aldermen of all the cities of Germany in behalf of Christian schools. It was a "cry of despair."¹ The schools still held it within their power to avert the looming tragedy of anarchy.

I hold it incumbent on those in authority to command their subjects to keep their children in school; for it is beyond doubt their duty to insure the permanence of the above-named offices and positions, so that preachers, jurists, curates, scribes, physicians, school-masters and the like, may not fail among us.²

Luther knew that this was an emergency of the first magnitude. If local authorities have the right to order their subjects into battle in time of war, "with how much more reason ought they to compel the people to keep their children at schools."

I tell you, in a word, that a diligent, devoted school teacher, preceptor, or any other person, no matter what his title, who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never receive an adequate reward, and no money is sufficient to pay the debt you owe him.³

It was not altogether unnatural that Luther should turn to the schools in the moment of emergency, even though in later years he spoke of the ones he attended as "hell and purgatory." As a matter of fact he, himself, was as

¹"Notschrei der durch Thatasche des plotzlichen und allgemeinen Niedergangs des Unterrichtswesens seit dem Anfang der Kirchen revolution ausgepresst ist."

²Martin Luther, Works (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1916-1932), Vol. IV, p. 10.

³Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 173.

much professor as priest when he wrote that he would like to become a teacher if he were forced to end his preaching. Martin Luther spent most of his life in school. He was a full professor at Wittenberg University, and a doctor of Sacred Scriptures. In his later years he was universally acclaimed as the "Doctor of Doctors." He labored through the long years of preparation at the scholastic University of Erfurt, the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life at Eisleben and Magdeburg, and each of them left great residues in his thinking, forming intrinsic elements of the philosophical and religious system that became the Protestant Reformation. Problems of the schools and their curriculum and administration were a part of the movement, and a philosophy of education was born, adapted and crystallized as the Reform advanced. The first phase of this interdependent record was one of the influence of germinal notions learned by Martin Luther in the schools he attended and flowering in an evangelical theology; the second phase was one of emergency and radicalism when it seemed all permanent and traditional values might be lost in a wave of extremism; the third was a period of reaction and consolidation in which basic principles were compromised and significant insights emasculated.

It all began when the five year old son of a coal miner was led by a neighbor boy to the public school of

Mansfield, Germany, on St. Gregory's Day, 1483.⁴

2. thThe Luder Family

Martin Luther's boyhood was a thoroughly undistinguished one, and he did not carry many pleasant memories from his early home and schooling into adulthood. Like most of the other boys of the town he went to the grammar school for eight years - around the calendar and with no holidays - and there endured a rigorous education at the hands of a merciless pedagogue. Neither his teacher nor his parents seemed to understand that children differ, and must be handled differently; the generally accepted principle was that children thrive on thrashing as much as on food and exercise. Martin's mother once beat him till the blood ran for stealing a nut from the kitchen, and once his father flogged him so severely that the boy never forgot it. In later years Luther remembered that he was beaten fifteen times in one morning at school. However, upon sifting out what appears to be hearsay and biased evidence, the fact seems to remain that the first thirteen years of Luther's life were completely normal ones. That apparently arid fact reveals a great body of significant lore and common experience that was to become an integral part of both reformer and Reformation.

⁴March 12. Cf. Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 38 and footnote.

The social and cultural background upon which Luther came into the world was that of the Thuringian family at the end of the middle ages. He inherited the moral and religious standards, the cultural and educational ideals of his class, many of which, in spite of the intellectual and spiritual buffetings of the following years, he was never to discard.

Luther's ancestors were a clan of peasants engaged in husbandry in the country districts of Mehra. It was the custom among these peasants that the older children of the family leave home to make their own way in the world, and that the youngest in the family inherit the home and land. Under the economic pressure of the emerging Industrial Revolution, and the restlessness of a serfdom trying vaguely to pull itself out of near-slavery into something ever so slightly better, Hans Luder took his wife and little family to the dreary village of Eisleben,⁵ where he became a metallicus or poor miner. It was here that Martin was born, late in 1483 or early in the next year.

The poor miner, however, must soon have become conscious of the meagerness of his prospects for advancement, for in the summer of 1484 he moved with his family to Mansfield, the center of a flourishing mining industry. There it was the policy of the Counts of Mansfield to build and let out on hire small smelting furnaces to individual

⁵Martin Luther, Tischreden (Weimar: Hermann Pechlauss, 1912-1921), #6250.

workmen. A man who learned the trade quickly and knew how to save his money could rise in the world. Hans Luder did both, and soon made his way. He leased one and then three of these furnaces⁶ and by 1511 was part owner of at least six shafts and two foundries.⁷ For a long time, however, the family lived in near-poverty and actual anxiety in Mansfield while Hans was learning and establishing himself. Luther later often recalled seeing his mother carrying wood for the family fire. Hans was a serious-minded, severe and industrious man, with a "robust, solid body." Both he and Margaret, his wife, worked very hard; the taut, drawn faces shown in their pictures clearly tell the story of a difficult life. Martin once told how he and two other lads once collected sausages in the streets,⁸ but this may not have been so much to support the family as to lighten a grey life with a bit of sport, though incidentally, with a welcome change of nourishment.

Amid the harsh, grimy, coarse surroundings of a German mining town, the lad was protected from much that was evil by the pious severity of his parents, and the simple religious and ecclesiastical ideas and superstitions of his family. It was not a pharasaical but rather a serious, hardworking religion that young Martin learned. Occasionally

⁶Thomas M. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), Vol. I, p. 193.

⁷Boehmer, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁸Luther, *Tischreden* (Weimar), #137.

Hans drank too much, and then, contrary to his habitual nature, he was in high spirits and jovial. Father Hans was a sturdy, respectable citizen, and before 1491 was elected to membership in the Mansfield "Commission of Four,"⁹ a committee of burghers charged with the duty of representing the citizens in the transactions of the municipal council.¹⁰ Apparently the playful uncle, Klein-Hans Luder, who was haled into court eleven times between 1499 and 1513 for assault and battery, did not appear in Mansfield until after young Martin had left for advanced schooling.¹¹ It was probably during his two terms on the "Commission of Four" that Hans glimpsed for the first time the security and respect of a privileged class. At any rate, Hans determined that his son was to go through school and become a lawyer, perhaps to guarantee his own security in old age. Though he did not contribute much to Martin's education financially, he was deeply interested in continuing the self-lifting process he had begun when he had left his peasant's home for the coal mines of Eisleben, and when Martin determined to become a monk years later, he opposed the change. When his son told him of the vision in the forest near Erfurt which caused him to utter the vow to enter a monastery, the older

⁹The so-called "Vierherren."

¹⁰Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), pp. 22 f.

¹¹Boehmer, op. cit., p. 12.

man exclaimed, "Supposing it was an evil spirit!" Perhaps this frustration of his well-laid plans appealed to him as a proper function for the Evil One. However, the dignity of the priesthood appealed to Hans sufficiently to bring him to the ordination ceremony of his son with a gift and good wishes.

3. Martin Luther Starts to School

It was probably a municipal Latin school to which Nicholas Osmeler led young Martin in March of 1488. There is no way of knowing whether the Mansfield school was better or worse than the other "Trivial" schools of the day.¹² So named because the classic trivium comprised the curriculum rather on account of the quality of the subject matter, the schools taught Latin and little else, for Latin was the universal language of scholarship in Europe. Beginning students started by memorizing several Latin words daily, and later they repeated, copied and memorized as teachers dictated and explained forms. First exercises were in the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, and some of the prayers and liturgy of the Roman mass, for one of the purposes of such a school

¹²The Latin school was the basic educational institution of German cities in the late middle ages. They were under the special watchcare of the city council, which sharply controlled too vigorous punishment, laxity on the part of the teachers, and in some cases, the schoolmaster's "salary," which was made up chiefly of trade and shares.

was to prepare choir boys for the village church. As soon as possible, the boys passed on to the Grammar of Donatus, the Distiches of Cato, and selections from Aesop's Fables and the philosophy of Boethius. As a student mounted the scale through the trivium of grammar, logic and rhetoric, he would reach the poets Plautus and Terence. The boys learned these textbooks by heart, and it is probable that Luther never had a book in his hand until after he left Mansfield.¹³

As recruits for the church choir, the boys learned to sing the music of the mass, and had daily exercises in the chapel. Luther's musical genius seems to have budded early under this training. The boys took part in the processions and religious festivals which were such a passion of the later Middle Ages, and which allowed so much opportunity for musical features.

Aside from Latin and music Luther probably studied very little. The classes were large, the instructor kept very busy, and a great deal of time was wasted. Some students spent as much as twenty years with Donatus; Luther seems never to have advanced to the class in arithmetic, and later mourned that he was taught "no history at all."

¹³Luther could repeat whole sections from these sources as an old man, and called them the best books next to the Bible. Thomas Platter still found no books in many classes in the course of his wanderings through various schools of Germany during the first decade of the sixteenth century.

Lessons were hammered into the memory by sheer force of prodigious repetition, and often the teacher's rod was considered the best pedagogic instrument. Students sometimes referred to school books as Spardorsum - back-sparer. It seems to have been a general custom in German schools to hold a spring picnic on which the students went out into the woods to cut a supply of birch switches for the year. It was a day of games and sometimes beer was allowed for the boys, so that someone christened the excursion "virgidenia," a word coined from vindexia (vintage) and virgla (the rod).¹⁴

4. Education in Medieval Germany

Though it is impossible to know with any certainty, it may be assumed from the lack of negative evidence, that

¹⁴Friedrich Paulsen, German Education, Past and Present, T. Lorenz, translator (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 31.

Beating was not the only form of incentive to learning used by these late medieval schoolteachers. Castigation was in common use in the convents as a necessary and pious exercise, and an occasional dose was administered to stubborn school children on whom external beatings seemed to have no effect.

It is to be expected that there were some who distinguished themselves from the common practice in the schools, and it may not be amiss to quote Anselm from the twelfth century: "In educating youth we should learn a lesson from the artists, who do not fashion their gold and silver images with blows alone, but they press and touch them lightly, and finally complete their work with gentleness." Chancellor Gerson of the University of Paris (died 1429) wrote a work entitled Bringing Children to Christ recommending a mild discipline: "Above all, let the teacher try to be a father to his pupils. Let him never be angry with them. Let him always be simple in his instruction, and relate to his pupils that which is wholesome and agreeable."

Martin Luther's early school training was very much like that enjoyed or endured by almost every other boy who grew up in a German town in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Following the educational depression of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when even at St. Gall, a place earlier famous as a seat of learning, but a single monk could be found in 1291 who could read and write,¹⁵ a desire for education had spread all over Germany in the fifteenth century. Princes, burghers and towns vied with each other in setting up schools. Within a century and a half no fewer than seventeen new universities were founded in Germany. Even small towns maintained Latin schools for their children. Breslau, "the student's paradise," had seven. Frankfurt-on-the-Main founded a high school for girls in the early fifteenth century, and insisted that the teachers were to be learned ladies who were not nuns.¹⁶

It seems safe to conclude from the rapid development of the art of printing into an important industry during the latter part of the fifteenth century in Germany that there was a widespread demand for books and a general ability to read and write. When the early humanist scholar Conrad

¹⁵Samuel G. Williams, The History of Mediaeval Education (Syracuse: C. W. Bardeen, 1903), p. 183.

¹⁶Cf. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 53 f. It is estimated that in England, prior to Henry VIII's confiscations, there were not less than 300 grammar schools, or one for every 8,000 people. The poll tax returns of 1377 showed forty-two towns, with a total population of 180,000. Except for Dartmouth, with a population of 942, every one had a grammar school.

Celtis learned of the amazing possibilities of the printing press, he exclaimed, "Ahah! No longer can priests monopolize their holy science; heaven and hell now give up their secrets!" By 1470 Anthony Coberger was employing a hundred assistants and presses in running twenty-four presses at Nuremberg. In 1507 Wapfeling declared:

As the Apostles went forth of old, so now the disciples of the sacred art (or printing) go forth from Germany into all lands and their printed books become heralds of the Gospel, preachers of truth and wisdom.¹⁷

Sebastian Brandt called the people of Germany "Bookfools." Seventeen translations of the Bible appeared before Luther's, fourteen in high German and three in low German. Up to 1500 there were ninety-eight complete versions of the Vulgate published. Martin Luther enrolled at the school in Mansfield as the light of a new day was beginning to dawn upon darkened Europe.

Town Latin schools, such as that Luther attended in Mansfield, had their roots in the old, established parish schools. Every parish priest during the Middle Ages trained a number of boys for assistance in the religious services he conducted in the parish church; the curriculum was kept to a minimum, and all of it was under the direct guidance and control of the church. Other schools were maintained by the

¹⁷Alexander Clarence Flick, The Decline of the Medieval Church (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), vol. II, p. 253. The material in this entire paragraph is digested from Flick, pp. 252 ff.

church for the training of priests and church officials, but this was a specialized and restricted education. As the cities grew the existing schools failed to meet the demands of the burghers for the education of their children, and because the subjects they desired that their children master were not necessarily those which would qualify a boy for the priesthood, a tension rapidly developed between ecclesiastical and town authorities. During the thirteenth century great cities grew up at the important points along the trade routes, and these cities possessed enough power and independence to free the training of their children from the dominance of the church. In Cologne city schools are mentioned in documents dating to 1234. Lubeck grew so rapidly that it soon became dangerous, so the burghers argued, for their sons to walk to the cathedral school, and a public school was organized in 1262. In Hamburg, after eight years of opposition from the head of the cathedral school, the town succeeded in setting up a public school. The city council of Breslau established its own school in 1267 so that the children would not be forced to cross the dangerous bridges over the Oder to attend the cathedral school. These were chiefly Latin schools, but in Lubeck a dispute resulted in the establishment of four vernacular schools in 1400 to instruct the pupils in "reading, writing, and to teach them good manners in a way that will assure God's reward and contribute to the honor and dignity of the city of Lubeck." In the larger cities city clerks, wandering scholars, and

sometimes local women set up their own classes. Such teachers for children are mentioned in Frankfort-on-the-Main as early as 1364; women teachers are spoken of in Speier in 1362, and Mayence before 1300.¹⁸

With all their eagerness for the training of the younger generation, the towns of Europe did but little to improve the kind of education their children received. The material surroundings were probably no better than they were in the universities, where the noise, stench and confinement rendered remarkable the achievements of medieval scholars. The foundation of all studies was grammar, and it appears that though medieval education furnished the student with considerable mental gymnastics it did not provide him with much real knowledge. A fragment of dialogue from a little book used a great deal in German schools has been preserved: Es tu scholaris? is the title.

"Why are you a scholar?" the little student is asked.

"Because I go to school and learn letters."¹⁹

"What do you do?"

"I get up in the morning, dress at once, brush my hair, wash my hands, pray to God, and go to school gladly."

"What do you read?"

"I do not read, I listen."

¹⁸E. Nohle, History of the German School System, Report of the United States Commissioner of Education (1897-98), Vol. I, pp. 1-26.

¹⁹The word litterae has a general sense.

"What do you hear?"

"Donatus or Alexander or logic or music." And then the lad explains why it is necessary to avoid the company of women and laymen, for this happens to be a school for future clergymen.²⁰

In medieval much as in present times, the attitude, curriculum and condition of the universities contributed much to the lower schools. The educational philosophy of the Middle Ages may be judged from the comment of Phabanus Maurus:

Arithmetic is important on account of the secrets contained in the numbers; the Scriptures also encourage its study, since they speak of numbers and measures. Geometry is necessary, because in Scripture circles of all kinds occur in the building of the ark, and Solomon's temple. Music and astronomy are required in connection with divine service, which can not be celebrated with dignity and decency without music, nor on fixed and definite days without astronomy.²¹

The Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas is an intelligent reflection of the reverence for the name and thought of Aristotle that took the form of a religious fervor among the less creative. It was decided that there were no spots in the sun because Aristotle made no mention of the phenomenon. What seemed to be spots were therefore defects in the smoked glass used by the observer. In a Life of Aristotle circulated

²⁰P. M. Powicke, The Christian Life in the Middle Ages (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 98.

²¹A philosopher and teacher of the ninth century.

during the Middle Ages the Stagirite is declared to be a forerunner of Christ. Possibly because it was far more analytical and logical than anything the medievalists had been able to produce, Aristotle's system was accepted as the physical parallel of the spiritual revelation of Scripture. Lindsay recounts that in the medieval church of the Dominicans in Pisa, a picture represents Aristotle as standing on the right of Thomas Aquinas, with Plato on the left, while the rays streaming from their opened books make a halo around the head of the medieval theologian.²²

However, despite the barrenness of the education offered by the medieval universities, they grew both in numbers and size. At the close of the fourteenth century there were forty-five universities in Western Europe. Thirty-five were founded in the fifteenth, and five more at the beginning of the sixteenth century.²³ Some of the famous and ancient universities, like Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Prague and Cologne, enrolled thousands of students; there may have been as many as fifty thousand young men in the universities of Europe at the close of the fifteenth century, and some estimate that about six thousand of these were of German nationality.²⁴ To

²²Lindsay, op. cit., p. 57.

²³Twenty in Italy, eighteen in France, eighteen in Spain and Portugal, fifteen in Germany, five in the British Isles, three in Hungary, two in Scandinavia, and one in the Low Countries, one in Switzerland, one in Bohemia, one in Poland.

²⁴Paulsen (op. cit., p. 32) estimates that if the average time spent at the university were two years, twenty

these university students should be added those who had attended the city schools for a few years. Inclusive statistics are impossible: in Nuremberg there were in 1485 four schools with four schoolmasters, twelve ushers, 245 sons of citizens as paying pupils, and a considerable number of "poor scholars." In 1532 the nonpaying students were restricted to 110. In Augsburg there was a procession in 1503 in which the clergy and the pupils of the five town-schools participated: 523 in all.²⁵

5. New Influences in German Thought

While there was no lack of schools and universities in Germany in the fifteenth century or students to attend them, very little of creative or progressive thought was

years would have produced about sixty thousand, an astonishing figure at a time when the class of government officials from whom a previous academic training is required had not yet come into existence. Rashdall (The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895], Vol. II, part 2, p. 585) estimates the size of German universities at a period when the figures for each were most accurate. If anything these estimates are low, but it should be remembered that they often include every sort of student down to the merest grammar boy:

Prague, 1027 (between 1380 and 1389)
 Vienna, 933 (second half of the sixteenth century)
 Leipsic, 662 (in 1472)
 Heidelberg, 285 (1386-1550)
 Erfurt, 506 (to ca. 1450)
 Cologne, 852 (1450-1469)
 Rostock, 350-466
 Griefswald, 103 (1465-1500)
 Freiburg, 143 (1460-1500)
 Basle, 280 (1460-1480).

²⁵Paulsen, op. cit., p. 33.

achieved or attempted. All of the universities were directly under the influence of the church, and therefore the public schools, though under municipal control, were presided over by schoolmasters trained in church dominated institutions. In the universities a dry and arid scholasticism dictated the courses and methods of study. Duns Scotus, William of Occam and Gabriel Biel rather than Thomas Aquinas were the thinkers who wielded most influence in German universities, but even their "modern" systems were scholastic, and exploited all kinds of verbal and logical subtleties.

It was the rediscovery of the spirit of antiquity that changed everything. Italy made the discovery, and men intoxicated themselves with the spirit of freedom which they drank deeply from the pagan philosophy and literature of Greece and Rome. The scholar in Italy became adventuresome, calculating, well-dressed, and immoral. Literary men spent their sober moments learning Greek and searching for classical manuscripts. The various forms of artistic expression underwent a complete revolution; self-expression and natural expression became motifs. Bertrand Russell has observed that there is no sin that he can think of that the men of the Italian Renaissance did not commit, except destroying ancient manuscripts.

The classical revival in Italy soon burned itself out. Its rekindled appreciation of sense perception degenerated into sensuality, its instinct for beauty into trifling, its enthusiasm for the ancient world into a new

paganism. There were permanent values, however, that were to be of tremendous significance. At the cost of social standards and moral tradition, men's minds had been set free from the intellectual prison house maintained by the church for a millenium. Copernicus began to study the motion of planets, Columbus sailed westward to get to India, and Galileo proved Aristotle wrong by the simple but essentially original method of dropping weights from the tower of Pisa. The horizons of the skies, the world and the inner mind were being pushed back, and what men discovered in this new universe was the beginning of the modern world.

Nicholas of Cusa²⁶ denied that the earth was the center of the universe because the universe was infinite in extent and therefore could have no center at all. He decided that the earth made a diurnal rotation on its axis, drew a map of the known world and attempted to correct the mariner's astronomical tables. His pupil, Georg von Feuerbach,²⁷ was made professor of mathematics at the University of Vienna, and from this former academic stronghold of the church made long strides in mathematical astronomy. In turn, his pupil Johann Muller²⁸ wrote the earliest modern trigonometry. In 1482 the first arithmetic textbook of the modern world was published in Germany, rich in problems dealing with practical

²⁶1401-1464.

²⁷1423-1461.

²⁸1463-1476.

life: commercial problems, how to estimate heights, measure distances, weigh bales and casks, and how to use the gauge.²⁹

Scientific minds perfected the compass and the astrolabe, which had been long known to the Arabs, and Portuguese sailors led the world in setting long courses out of sight of land across the seas to new worlds. Only five years after the first voyage of Columbus, John Cabot reached the mainland of North America. Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in the same year and sailed on to the Orient. In 1519 Magellan's expedition put out from Spain to sail entirely around the world.

These discoveries changed the map of Europe as well as those ancient projections of "The World." For centuries Italy had been the chief commercial country of Europe and culture was largely confined to Italian cities, but suddenly Cadiz, Lisbon, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, London and Amsterdam became centers of world trade. A tremendous new middle class of bankers and traders sprang up in Europe, new industries came into life which did not follow the ancient guild system, and new wealth began to flow freely through many hands - workman, financier, buyer, seller, carrier. As the cities grew, rural life became less and less stable. Rising prices accompanied the sudden increase in the amount of money in circulation. The invention of gunpowder declassified the armed knight as a soldier, and the king's court

²⁹Cf. L. L. Jackson, Sixteenth Century Arithmetic (New York: Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 184.

became a circle entered by favoritism rather than personal achievements. With expanding trade the administration of the national affairs became more complex, and demanded the services of a trained staff of ambassadors, counselors, lawyers.

Within a century a society that had been solidified for a thousand years became fluid. Science, exploration, trade, - these were the gathering forces which would soon change all of European life. It is usually true, however, that men are not conscious of the tremendous tensions of the age in which they live. At the end of the fifteenth century the average peasant in Germany, except for a vague restlessness and discontent within his own soul, was wholly ignorant of the changes about to take place, and of which he was soon to become an important part. Martin Luther, a lad plugging halfheartedly away at Donatus and Plautus in the municipal Latin school of a dingy mining town of central Germany, was quite unaware that the scene was being set for his dramatic entrance into history. The deeper influence of Renaissance culture upon the thought of Christian leaders and upon the church itself would only later appear.

6. The Common Heritage

Unaware of the gathering turbulence of intellectual and cultural currents that were beginning to swirl about them, most European peasants dwelt content in the deep and

quiet eddies of religious lore and semipagan superstition that gave life meaning for the common man. Saints for every sickness and misfortune gave comfort to poor peasant families like the Luders of Mansfield who had few friends on earth and were dimly aware of class distinctions in heaven; rather than calling upon Christ or God, Himself, they sought the help of St. Anthony for inflamed eyes and limbs, St. Erasmus for stomachache, and St. Martin for sick cattle. Incredible tales relieved the dull greyness of a workman's lot with dashes of color: fruit fell from trees in a certain garden in the form of a perfect cross, stones from a well having a holy name cured diseases, Christmas trees bore green fruit, a house in Luxemburg in which some holy wine had been spilled was cursed and burned by unseen hands, in 1432 three suns were seen in the sky, and when two of them disappeared countless worms were seen on the snow, and, most marvelous of all, a pope's death had been signaled by a cross on the sun. In one district of Germany a fish the size of a man was caught dressed and mitred like a bishop. It was taken to the king, who was prevented by three alert bishops from spearing it when it refused to answer his questions. Taken back to the water it gave the king and his people a blessing and then disappeared below the surface, never to appear again. Heavenly visions were common and witnessed by thousands; storms, strokes of lightning, disease and all sorts of misfortunes were said to be punishment for sins, and a magistrate who sentenced an innocent

man suddenly fell dead. Saints were revered everywhere, and the collection of holy relics became an important business both for collector and agent. The items were varied and valuable: pieces of Noah's ark, drops of sweat from Gethsemane, incense offered by the wise men from the East, the Virgin's milk, pots used by Jesus at Cana, bits of Aaron's rod and the burning bush, authentic samples of manna and thorns from the crown that tortured Jesus, straw on which the Baby Jesus lay, the leg of the ass on which Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, a tunic of John the Baptist, a portion of the table on which the last supper was eaten, a finger of St. Anne, the body of one of the innocent babes of Bethlehem, and final triumph - a sample of the earth from which God made Adam. The Archbishop of Mainz boasted that he possessed forty-two entire bodies of saints, and nine thousand parts of relics. Nicholas Muffel of Nuremberg complained bitterly that after thirty-three years of energetic collection he had succeeded in securing only three hundred specimens. Ironically, Muffel, the enthusiastic collector, died on the gallows for theft. Frederick the Wise of Saxony, protector of the Reformation, had five thousand sacred relics, the value of which was reckoned at five hundred thousand years of absolution from Purgatory. The Venetian Senate offered ten thousand ducats for the seamless coat of Christ in 1455, and when the head of St. Andrew arrived at Rome in 1462, the Pope and Cardinals went out to meet it at Milvian Bridge where Pius II gave a speech

of welcome.³⁰

Legend and folk lore combined to keep the average peasant from becoming too discontented with the quality of religion mediated to him through the local church. The clergy was far from what it should have been. Archbishop Gunther of Magdeburg did not say mass until he had been in office thirty-five years, and Robert of Strassburg never said one at all. The monks of Leubus refused to hold masses for the dead unless the abbot gave them a daily measure of beer as good as his own.³¹ Power, prestige and luxury became the concerns of the higher clergy, and the lower ecclesiastics were oppressed and their professional training sadly neglected. In many places in Europe the incompetency of the ministry could be attributed to the devastation of the Black Death and other plagues³² but conditions were not notably improved as the years went by. No inconsistency was seen in accepting, or if need be in purchasing, spiritual benefits from a Pope whom everyone knew to be immoral and unholy. French soldiers made Alexander VI tremble for his life one day, and the next nearly injured him by crowding around him to kiss his tunic. Cellini called Pope Clement a "savage beast" and yet on his knees implored forgiveness for murder.

³⁰Flick, op. cit., pp. 245 f. and 454-59.

³¹Ibid., p. 245.

³²Pierre J. Marique, History of Christian Education (New York: Fordham Press, 1928), Vol. II, p. 84 and footnote p. 84. Marique is, of course, an apologist.

Girolamo Olgiato prayed to St. Ambrose before he stabbed the Duke of Milan in St. Stephen's Church.³³

However, ecclesiastical neglect did not greatly affect the working classes of Germany, and the bliscent intrigues and offenses of the Italian courts were far away. Such a volume as the mystical book of popular theology which Luther christened Theologia Germanica when it stirred him a score of years later, reflected a simple and devout piety that was widespread in Germany:

Now mark what may help or further us towards union with God. Behold neither exercises, nor words, nor works, nor any creature, nor creature's works can do this. In this wise, therefore, we must renounce and forsake all things, that we must not imagine or suppose that any words, works, or exercises, any skill or cunning, or any created thing can help or serve us thereto. Therefore we must suffer these things to be what they are, and enter into the union with God.³⁴

Many people did not take too seriously the large force of clerks and the extended bookkeeping that the Church had built up to insure salvation, and the worship of saints, kissing of relics, keeping of fasts and telling of beads was an important and welcome variation from the monotonous routine of an earnest life.

If there was anything characteristic of the first thirteen years of Martin Luther's life, it was the absence of anything unusual.³⁵ It was an entirely normal environment

³³Plück, op. cit., p. 460.

³⁴Chapter 27.

³⁵Boehmer, op. cit., p. 16: "Something unusual can always be expected of such children."

in which he grew up. He remembered that his parents were "pious" people, but he never mentioned that either his mother or father taught him to pray. He learned the lessons that were part of the common possession of every boy of his neighborhood and school: that the Emperor was God's ruler on earth who would protect poor people against Turks and other invaders, that the church was the "Pope's House." He was taught the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, and he sang simple German hymns like Ein Kindlein so lobelich, Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist, and Christ ist erstanden. He was taught about Hell and Purgatory and the Judgment to come, and one biographer imagines that he shivered whenever he looked at the stained-glass window in the parish church and saw the frowning face of Jesus, who, seated on a rainbow and with a flaming sword in his hand, was coming to judge him, he knew not when.³⁶ He probably stood beside the road and watched the pilgrims stream past toward Wimmelberg where the sick would be cured by the sound of the blessed bells in the chapel there, or to Kyffhauser where diseases were cured when one embraced a wooden cross.

Little Martin grew up in an environment which was imaginative and superstitious and bequeathed to him a vast fund of popular information and mythological lore which he never left behind. The cosmology with which he grew up was typically medieval. The sophisticated burghers of Mansfield

³⁶Lindsay, op. cit., p. 194.

had a perfectly clear and precise conception of the universe. The earth was at the center, of course, though the stars were larger. Above the earth was a huge vault which angels, with miraculous power, made to revolve once every twenty-four hours. This azure vault overhead, all too frequently overcast by clouds in central Germany, was firm and solid; above it the heaven extended. Hell was inside the earth under their feet, and was the abode of the demons. It was natural, therefore, that the miners who spent so much of their time beneath the surface of the earth, would know a great deal more about the devils than ordinary people.

All of these conceptions Martin assimilated and made a part of himself; he was a typical child of the day. In later years, with the advantage of a theological education, he knew exactly what went on in heaven. God sat on a throne surrounded by his angels, whose arms were so long that they could stretch down from the celestial heights and protect men on earth. When a devil came to injure anyone, an angel would often keep him at bay. "It were not good for us to know how earnestly the holy angels strive for us against the devil, or how hard the combat is," Luther said once. "If we could see how many angels one devil makes work we would despair."³⁷

He knew what Adam had said in the Garden of Eden.

³⁷William Hazlitt (trans. and ed.), The Table Talk of Martin Luther (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), #DIDIII, p. 246.

He knew what God had said to Adam. Indeed, had not our first father written his memoirs, which had been edited by Moses, and in which the creation and first sin were literally described? It was a result of original sin that men are obliged to wear clothes and live in houses made of stone and wood. It was due to Adam's fall. "Just as a sick man requires drugs supplied by the apothecary, so do we require houses, clothes and shoes. But for Adam's fall we should all be young folks gambolling about naked, without carpenters, cobblers and houses."³⁸ And it was because Adam ate the forbidden apple that man now had to eat and drink.

Paradise was to be the abode of the elect. "Toads and snakes and other poisonous creatures will no longer try to hurt us," Luther mused. "They will be sweet and amiable, gay and agreeable: we shall take pleasure in playing with them." In Paradise the wool of sheep was pure gold thread, the flowers and leaves were pearls and emeralds, and bugs exuded a delicious scent.³⁹

One day the company at Luther's table was speculating on how they would be able to while away the time during such a lengthened period as eternity. "There will be no change there, no work, no business; we shall not even have to eat and drink," Luther had said. "Let us have hope," was his conclusion, "that we shall be able to kill time

³⁸Brian Lunn, Martin Luther, the Man and His God (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, Ltd., 1934), p. 236.

³⁹Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #579-590.

there by having a sufficient number of objects to contemplate." To this Melancthon, a younger man, replied simply: "Master, reveal the Father to us; that will suffice."⁴⁰

Within the framework of all this intriguing naivete, Luther proposed one of those brilliant insights which brands him as enigma: "The despair which lays hold of a guilty conscience is what constitutes eternal punishment."⁴¹

It was the literal understanding of the Bible which he had received from his age that joined him to the popular rejection of Copernicus' theory of the universe. The Abbot had actually dared to come forward and maintain that the earth revolved about the sun. Luther shrugged his shoulders. He read in the Bible that Joshua made the sun to stand still; it was not the earth that he made stand still. Copernicus was obviously a fool.⁴²

From his reading of the Bible, Luther knew the exact date for the creation of the world: 4116 years before the birth of Christ; and he was convinced that it would end in 1560.⁴³

Moreover, was it not a marvelous proof of God's power that he had been able to construct the vault of the sky without pillars to support it? One day, when he was out

⁴⁰Lunn, op. cit., p. 237.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 238.

⁴²Pife, op. cit., p. 31.

⁴³Ibid., p. 32.

in the country, Luther was terrified lest the great black clouds lowering above him would fall on his head, when suddenly he saw a rainbow appear which held them up and prevented them from coming down. Immediately he marveled that such a light, fine, diaphanous thing as the rainbow could support the weight of those huge, opaque, impenetrable black clouds, the weight of which must be enormous.⁴⁴

It was a characteristic of these days before the dawn of objective information that mysterious and credulous meanings were attached to every phenomenon of nature, and Luther completely assimilated the color and wonder of medieval life. He thought the Italians could poison people by making them look at themselves in a mirror.⁴⁵ He believed that stags lived for nine hundred years.⁴⁶ The last time the Elector of Saxony went hunting, he failed to catch any game - his animals no longer knew their master, and it was an omen of his death.⁴⁷

The miners of Mansfield, laboring deep in the mysterious bowels of the earth, knew a great deal about the nether spirits that common folk, working in the light of the sun, would never desire to question. (Have you ever been a miner? Well! let me tell you how the devil really works.) "The devil vexes and harrasses the workmen of the mines," Luther

⁴⁴Pife, op. cit., p. 32.

⁴⁵Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #1327.

⁴⁶Ibid., #2223.

⁴⁷Lunn, op. cit., p. 309.

told his dinner companions. "He makes them think they have found fine new veins of silver, which, when they have labored and labored, turn out to be mere illusions. Even in open day, on the surface of the earth, he causes people to think they see a treasure before them, which vanishes when they pick it up." It was always a devilish greed to want more money, anyway. "At times treasure is really found, but this is by the special grace of God. I never had any success in the mines, but such was God's will and I am content."⁴⁸

Luther used to hear the devil carrying bushels from Hell and dragging them about on earth, rolling barrels down the stairs, and see him pulling faces at him and showing him his backside. "There are many devils in woods, in waters, in wildernesses, and in dark pooly places, ready to hurt and prejudice people," he said. "Some are also in the thick black clouds, which cause hail, lightnings and thanderings, and poison the air, the pastures and grounds."⁴⁹ He believed absolutely in the personal existence of the devil, and had many hand-to-hand struggles with him. "If the devil should come and torment you by filling your mind with gloomy thoughts," he said in 1530, "just go and have a drink, or play, or crack salacious jokes. And if the devil comes and tells you not to drink, reply: All right,

⁴⁸Hazlitt, op. cit., #DLXVIII, p. 280.

⁴⁹Ibid., #DLXXIV, p. 247.

I am going to drink, and that with a clear conscience. You do not wish me to drink? Then I will drink all the more heartily."⁵⁰ Which is an extremely clever way of dealing with the Old Boy, and serves him right.

No evidence is found throughout Luther's life or any change from the vivid pictures of the worlds of baleful spirits that he learned as a child in Mansfield. At all periods of his life he paints them with extraordinary intimacy and a vivid picturesqueness. The pictures he draws are so colorful and definite as to suggest such childhood associations as might have originated in the devil figures in religious plays or the dramas enacted at the annual fairs in German towns. In these plays the devil plays the karp, he goes to a dance, he sits behind the great oven and mocks at the audience. He appears as a dandy wearing a green hat with a blue feather.⁵¹

In Luther's home the death of a younger brother was attributed to witchcraft.⁵² During one of his conversations recorded in the Table Talk, Luther said that his mother had had to undergo infinite annoyance from one of her neighbors who was a witch, and whom she was "fein to conciliate with all sorts of attentions, for this witch could throw a charm upon children, which made them cry to death. A pastor

⁵⁰Lunn, op. cit., p. 314.

⁵¹Cf. Pife, op. cit., p. 27.

⁵²Hartmann J. Grisar, S.J., Martin Luther, His Life and Work (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1930), p. 10.

having punished her for some knavery, she cast a spell upon him by means of some earth on which he walked, and which she had bewitched. The poor man hereupon fell sick of a malady which no remedy could remove, and shortly after he died."⁵³

On another occasion Luther spun a yarn, apparently told and accepted as truth, of a magician named Wildfarer who lived at Nieuburg, who swallowed a countryman with his horse and cart. A few hours afterward man, horse and cart were all found in a slough some miles off. "I have heard, too," he continued, "of a seeming monk who asked a wagoner, that was taking some hay to market, how much he would charge to let him eat his fill of hay. The man said, a kreutzer, whereupon the monk set to work, and had nearly devoured the whole load when the wagoner drove him off."⁵⁴ "I would have no compassion on these witches," he is reported to have said. "I should burn all of them."⁵⁵

He recalled that in his home neighborhood on a high mountain called the Poltersberg, there was a lake, and if one threw a stone into it, there would come up a great storm and the whole country around would be stirred and moved by it.⁵⁶ And at forty-three years of age he declared his belief

⁵³Hazlitt, op. cit., #DLXXXII, p. 252.

⁵⁴Ibid., #DLXXX, p. 251.

⁵⁵Ibid., #DLXXXI, p. 251.

⁵⁶Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #3841.

that demons in female form were to be found in a pond behind the Probstei in Wittenberg. "Yes, without doubt, it is quite full of them."⁵⁷

From childhood he retained the belief that sickness was caused by demons who defied the physicians. He was once asked, Can good Christians and God-fearing people also undergo witchcraft? Luther replied: "Yes, for our bodies are always exposed to the attacks of Satan. The maladies I suffer are not natural but devil's spirits."⁵⁸ A strange dualism creeps into the misinformation he inherited from his home in regard to illness. "No malady comes from God, who is good, and wishes us well," he observed. "They all emanate from the devil, who is the cause and author of plagues, fevers, etc."⁵⁹ Luther's naivete in matters physiological is capped by this profound conclusion: "When young children cry lustily, they grow well and rapidly, for through crying the members and veins are stretched out, which have no other exercise."⁶⁰

However, his attitude toward astrology is an indication that Luther was not completely bound by popular contemporary folk lore. In spite of the arguments of Melancthon and the almost universal opinion of the age, he held astrology to be a fake. Obviously, it is not to be found in the

⁵⁷Fife, op. cit., p. 29.

⁵⁸Hazlitt, op. cit., #DLXXXIII, p. 262.

⁵⁹Ibid., #DLXXVII, p. 250.

⁶⁰Ibid., #DCCCLXXVIII, p. 315.

Bible. "As to astrology," he says, "'tis nothing."⁶¹ "Chirromancy we should utterly reject. Astrology is no art; it has no principle; no demonstration whereupon we may take sure footing; 'tis all haphazard work." The astrologers "set forth in their almanacs that we shall have no snow in summer time, nor thunder in winter; and this the country clowns know as well as the astrologers ... What is done by God ought not to be ascribed to the stars."⁶²

As medieval as his cultural presuppositions are Luther's judgments of economic questions and necessities. The Middle Ages were entirely agrarian in their views, but in Luther's century there was an emergent middle class in the cities, a class that looked with disdain on the peasants and suspicion on industry and trade as disreputable branches of livelihood. The Ship of Fools by Sebastian Brandt was a popular satire of the day, and in general the citizens of the new towns adopted an attitude of disrespect toward the peasants from whom they had themselves so recently come, satirizing their stupidity, avarice, and even their poverty. All purely financial affairs in which money plays the part of productive factor were generally damned. The attitudes Luther received from his family and town were fundamentally the same. He learned the medieval proverb: "A merchant can hardly be saved." The people from which he came thought

⁶¹Hazlitt, op. cit., #DCCCXLI, p. 341.

⁶²Ibid., #DCCCXLII, p. 341.

that all import trade was a great evil, that high finance with gain as its sole object was superfluous and to be feared because its intricacies were not understood. If people would only live according to the simple laws of Christianity and the Church there would be no need of adding these new complications to the already confusing business of living. Surrounded by a fearful and yet intensely personal and wonderful world of spirits and angels in which everything could be understood and explained in simple terms, there was no desire for innovations of any kind.

7. Child of the Day

This is the heritage of cultural ideas that Martin Luther received during his first thirteen years in the village of Mansfield: extremely ancient, medieval, unmodern. These were the notions accepted and taught in his home, implemented and enforced in the public Latin School of the village. That he succeeded in breaking through the tightly drawn circle of medieval concepts at any point is a result of the influence of threads of more enlightened thought woven into his life and consciousness by the Brethren of the Common Life at Magdeburg and Eisenach, and the modern scholastics at Erfurt, and above all, a tribute to the native insight of his religious being.

This was the background of Martin Luther, who began his historic career as a thoroughly indoctrinated child of

his age. Lucien Febvre has written:

When one looks at portraits of the Doctor dated from 1530 to 1533 one has the uncomfortable feeling of having met people like him in the towns of Germany. Too many of them in too many towns! To those accustomed to the refined faces of the prelates who are the glory of the Catholic Church, with their thin lips, their ascetic features, their limpid eyes in whose depths an undying flame is reflected, the somewhat aggressive vulgarity of the corpulent Luther in his fifties comes as a shock.⁶³

"I am a peasant," Luther later maintained, not altogether accurately. "I am the son of a peasant; my father, my grandfather and my ancestors were true peasants."⁶⁴ And once he added, to indicate that he was not ashamed of his descent: "Peasants have become kings and emperors."⁶⁵ But in most things Luther's tastes and instinctive reactions lay with the majority of the peasants who never rose to royalty. His dress, his way of living, his personal tastes were dictated by the time in which he lived. His patterns of thought and morality were largely formed by his civilization. He is rather to be comprehended than criticized as a product of his time; admired for those points at which he brilliantly broke through the established order of his day and for the sheer freedom and power of his own thought which set up standards so different that children would never again

⁶³Heinrich Boehmer, Luther and the Reformation in the Light of Recent Research (New York: The Christian Herald, 1916), p. 288.

⁶⁴Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #5574.

⁶⁵Grisar, op. cit., p. 2.

grow up exactly as his generation had done; understood in the areas in which he behaved very much as any other "intelligent man" of his time and class would have done.

Martin Luther drained the huge drinking mug with one long draught. "Wine is blessed by God," he sighed, "but as for beer, it is the creation of man."⁶⁶

It was a curious beaker, this favorite cup of the aging Doctor. He playfully called it his "catechism goblet," for he had once had it marked with three rings: the top to the first line, he said, was the Decalogue, the second represented the Creed, the third was the Lord's Prayer.

Agricola, one of his favorite afternoon companions, reached for the goblet and filled it for himself. Luther's face wrinkled and his eyes sparkled as he leaned forward. Agricola armed himself with a huge breath, but he could get no further than the Decalogue.

"I told you so!" exclaimed Luther triumphantly. "I knew you could not even reach the Creed!"⁶⁷

⁶⁶Lunn, op. cit., p. 337; from the Table Talk.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 338.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW DEVOTION

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CHAPTER II

THE NEW DEVOTION

1. Martin Luther at School

When Martin Luther left his home in Mansfield to enter preparatory school, the lad's whole life was changed and the long sequence of causes and effects was set in motion which twenty years later erupted in the Protestant Reformation. The thirteen year old boy left the secure home life of the Luder family and the familiar atmosphere of Mansfield to enter the busy and sophisticated life of the student in a medieval city; Martin Luther would never again return completely to the thought-world of his childhood. Moreover, the schools Luther attended in Magdeburg and Eisenach were under the direct influence of the Brethren of the Common Life, the most vital, independent and intelligent religious movement of medieval Europe.

It was by merest chance that Martin set off for Magdeburg. In the spring of 1496 Peter Heinecker, a neighbor and colleague of the Luders, decided to send his son to the famous school at Magdeburg.¹ Young Hans Heinecker was a

¹Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1940), p. 17. Beckisson suggests that the date was Easter, 1497 (James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation [London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925], Vol. I, p. 13.

good friend of Martin's, and it was quite natural that the families should decide to send their sons together to the distant city on the Elbe. Martin received some traveling expenses and a letter of introduction to one of the cathedral officials, Paul Mossbauer, who was a native of Mansfield, and trudged off into a different world. Apparently Martin roomed at the Mossbauer home in Magdeburg, but it was not like his own home, and he was expected to earn his own board. Singing in the streets and begging for alms was an accepted procedure for boys who attended school away from home, and Martin soon joined one of the semiofficial school choirs that wandered about the city. The boyish game of Mansfield became a steady and important task in Magdeburg.

The life of the preparatory school student in the late Middle Ages was a career and moved in a universe characteristically its own. Most of the middle schools of the period were closely connected with the churches, and were usually held in monasteries or outlying church buildings in the cities, which had been built and were maintained with no concern for the needs or comfort of school boys. With the notable exception of some parish priests and the Brethren of the Common Life, the schoolteachers were largely recruited from men who had been failures in other tasks. Many of them served but for brief periods, were inadequately paid, and most of them wandered from place to place with no security, little respect and few moral standards.²

²Cf. Samuel G. Williams, The History of Medieval

In 1572 Thomas Platter, a very old man with an alert memory and a concern for the education of his son Felix, sat down to write the story of his boyhood days in the schools of middle Germany. Platter's autobiography is an exciting story and permits the modern eye to glimpse the almost incredible hardships and vagrancy of a large number of mere boys of Luther's age.³ It was by chance that Martin himself escaped the experience of Thomas Platter.

Platter was born in 1499 in Switzerland while the bells were ringing for mass, and was destined by his parents to be a clergyman. As a boy he tended goats, but when he was nine he was sent to his uncle, a clergyman, for preliminary schooling. Thomas was an awkward peasant boy, and the uncle a man of short temper who often beat the lad without mercy, and lifted him up from the ground by the ears until he cried so loudly that the neighbors interfered. In the course of several years at this school, Thomas learned nothing but how to sing the Salve and the Um Nier with the other scholars.

A small band of wandering scholars presented the opportunity for escape, and Thomas joined the group which

Education (Syracuse: C. W. Bardeen, 1903), pp. 169 ff.; or any general educational history of the medieval period.

³Platter's story has been preserved intact and is available through a number of sources. I have used the "Extracts from the Autobiography of Thomas Platter, composed in the 73rd year of his age, for the instruction of his son Felix," as recorded in an appendix by Karl von Raumer in Geschichte der Pädagogik vom Wiederaufblühen Klassischer Studien bis auf unsere Zeit (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1877), Vol. I, pp. 335-43.

was wandering unhurriedly toward Dresden. With the youngest members of the band Thomas stole food and liquor for himself and the senior boys. The winter was spent at Dresden where Thomas was taken so ill that he was forced to go to the hospital. where good beds were deserted for sleeping on the hearth because there were fewer lice on the stones.

The scholars were covered with vermin to an extent that was scarcely credible. As often as I wished, I could pick two or three out of my bosom. I have often, especially in the summer, gone down to the Oder, washed my shirt, hung it on the bushes to dry, and meanwhile picked the vermin off my coat, dug a pit, buried a great quantity of it, covered them up, and marked the spot with a little cross.⁴

In the summer time the boys slept in the churchyard, spreading out stolen hay and lying there "like pigs in their straw." If it rained they ran into the school, and when there was a thunder storm they sang the Responsoria all night long with the sub-Cantor. Sometimes in the summer evenings the students would go to the alehouse to get beer for the older students and teachers at the school. The bartenders gave the beer to the boys in open buckets, and, as Thomas remembered,

I often drank so much before I knew it, that I could not go back to the school again, though it was but a stone's throw from where I was. In short, there was plenty to eat and drink, but not much studying.⁵

Copying was the chief educational method in the

⁴von Raumer, op. cit., p. 338.

⁵Ibid., pp. 338 f.

school Platter attended at St. Elizabeth's. There were no printed books, and whatever was studied had first to be read and copied, then construed, and then explained, "so that when the Pacchants left the school they had great thick copy-books to carry away with them."⁶ At Soleure Platter found a good school and "more abundant provision," but was disappointed to discover that "there was so much time spent in the church and otherwise consumed"⁷ that there was little education. In Zurich Thomas discovered Master Wolfgang Knoewell, who took his degree at Paris, and was called Le Gran Diable by the pupils:

He was a man of stalwart frame and honesty of purpose, but gave little heed to the school, attending more to the pretty maidens, whose charms he could not resist.⁸

Thomas had decided, however, that the time had come when he must settle down to his studies, after some nine years of wandering, stealing, and ignorance, "for I felt that there was no time to be lost." At Zurich he sought out Father Myconius who insisted that his pupils decline and conjugate every word of entire comedies of Terence. Myconius also taught from the Bible, and crowds of laymen would come to hear these lectures. He was a severe taskmaster, and Thomas would study the whole night through, putting raw turnips, sand or cold water in his mouth to keep

⁶von Raumer, op. cit., p. 339.

⁷Ibid., p. 341.

⁸Loc. cit.

himself awake. He labored with Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and often stole into Myconius' room before the master awoke in the morning and copied off Hebrew grammar.

[Myconius] was often so severe with me that my shirt was wet with perspiration, and my sight failed me; and yet he did not give me a blow, not even with his little finger ... But whenever he had been angry with me, he took me home with him and gave me to eat, and after I had eaten, he would listen in delight as I told of all that had befallen me in my long and many wanderings in Germany.⁹

Near the end of his long life Platter remembered that after nine years of wandering through the schools of Germany, "If my life had depended on it, I could not have declined a noun of the first declension."¹⁰

Boys in the medieval preparatory schools ponderously worked their way, often word by word, through Aristotle and Boethius in preparation for the involved aridities of a scholastic university education. Latin translations of Aristotle's Categoriae and De Interpretatione, Boethius' commentaries on the Aristotelian De Syllogismus Categoricalis, De Syllogismus Hypothetis, De Differentiis Topicis and De Divisionibus, as well as the exposition of dialectic by Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus and Isadore, were the chief components of the curriculum. Richerus describes the course given by Gerbert in the cathedral school at Rheims near the close of the tenth century as follows. There had been very

⁹ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 342.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 343.

little change in the subject matter in the five centuries that had elapsed before Luther went to school:

First he explained the Isagoge, that is, Porphyry's introductions to the categories of Aristotle according to the translations of ... Victorinus and ... Boethius. Then he explained Aristotle's book of the Categories or Predicates, and in suitable fashion made his pupils acquainted with the difficulties of the book ... De Interpretatione. Then he presented the topics, that is, the doctrines of the source of proof, which Tully has translated from Greek into Latin, and which ... [Boethius] has explained in a commentary in six books. With the same industry he read and explained the four books of the categorical and the three books of the hypothetical conclusions, the book of definitions, and the book of divisions.¹¹

A. The School of the Brethren at Magdeburg

That the school life of Martin Luther and his later place in history differ significantly from that of Thomas Platter is due chiefly to the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life. Platter never came within the sphere of their labor and dominance; Luther received his first training away from home in schools that had been influenced by their work, and through the personal and spiritual contacts made in them in later life repeatedly picked up the tenuous thread of their thought and attitude. In the latter half of the fourteenth century and during the whole of the fifteenth the Brethren inspired common people of the Netherlands and central Germany with a love of literature and sacred

¹¹Cited by Lewis F. Anderson, History of Common School Education (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), pp. 115 f.

study that had always been restricted to a few. They built a study of Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Terence and Herodotus on a foundation of Scripture knowledge. Beginning from Deventer on the banks of the Yssel in northern Holland, where Gerard Groote founded a brotherhood of priests twenty years before Chrysoloras came to Florence to teach Greek, they spread their love of Bible and classics over Holland, then into Belgium, Germany and France. Their school at Herzogenbusch had twelve hundred scholars at one time, and the school at Zwolle consistently ministered to a thousand boys. When the influence of the Italian Renaissance began to be felt in the north, the brethren became ardent teachers of Greek, sometimes Hebrew, and rhetoric. In a little more than a quarter of a century they established one hundred and fifty schools throughout western Europe, providing a real secondary school training for hundreds of teachers who continued and spread their work. Hegius, Wessel Gansfort and Johannes Wessel, Agricola, Reuchlin and Erasmus were pupils who became famous and worked tremendous direct influence upon the Reformation. The Brethren took no monastic vows, and lived a life of simplicity and self-denial coupled with a wholesome concern for public service. They were especially devoted to the "common people," whom they always taught free of charge. Their organization was freely adapted to the needs of the local situation: in some places they assisted in the schools already existing, in others they founded new schools and supervised the whole

management, in others they provided homes and employment for poor scholars. They gave unusual emphasis to singing and learning Latin in connection with the Scriptures, and seemed to instill many of their pupils with a reverent spirit of independent thought and experiment in the areas of religious life.¹²

The basic concern of the Brethren for the religious education of boys and their remarkably wholesome correction of the medieval ascetic attitude, led them gradually to develop an extraordinary improvement in the common schools of the age. Most of the lower schools in Europe needed a reform: they were largely one-room affairs, and often there was no division of students into grades. A great deal of time was devoted to the rehearsal of lessons that had never been explained, and some students spent twenty years learning to read and write the crudest combination of Latin and the vernacular. The same schedule was followed in all the seasons and month after month pupils were kept at school, much of the time without a great deal to occupy their young minds, from six in the morning till four in the afternoon.

In the schools of the Brethren, the school hours

¹²For brief reviews of the work of the Brethren, consult any survey of the history of education: Charles C. Beyer, *History of Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), pp. 186 ff.; or Oscar Browning, *An Introduction to the History of Educational Theories* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), pp. 41 ff. For the detailed information which appears in the later sections of this chapter I have relied on the unsurpassed study by Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the "Devotio Moderna"* (New York: The Century Company, 1925), balanced by chapters of von Raumer, *op. cit.*

were shortened by almost half. The teachers covered the same amount of material, for they insisted upon discipline and did not waste time with inefficiency and lack of interest. They seemed to realize that a boy's mind cannot concentrate very long on any single subject, and they varied the day's programs in addition to shortening the hours. The Brethren were disciplinarians, but their punishment was never harsh or cruel; with them the force of love was one of the primary tenets of the Christian life. Unexplained absences were punished, misbehavior was not countenanced, and those who would not behave were simply dismissed from the school. In other schools punishment was so severe that often parents intervened, weakening the teacher's authority over his pupils. No such parental assistance in the problems of the school life was permitted by the Brethren; in the school the teacher was sole master, a firm though kindly one.

As a general rule the schools of the Brethren were divided into eight classes, and each class was subdivided into groups of eight or ten pupils. The six lower classes were taught by one teacher, but in the upper two each subject was taught by a separate instructor. Unusual students were advanced as rapidly as they were able to master the subject matter, and each teacher was permitted to examine each of his students individually in order to determine the quality of his work. The most capable students in the highest class instructed in the two lowest grades, and each

subdivision of ten pupils was in charge of an advanced student whose responsibility it was to keep order.

In the average school of the late Middle Ages, religious instruction was limited to an explanation of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. In contrast to this practice, the schools of the Brethren taught a great deal from the Bible, and encouraged the boys to "love and fear God, to search the Scriptures and to lead virtuous lives." On Sundays and the numerous holidays, the boys listened to the reading and explanation of a definitely assigned selection of the New Testament Epistles for an hour in the morning, in the afternoon another hour was devoted to a passage from the Gospels, and in the evening a third hour to a selection from the Old Testament. During the reading the boys were to write down the most helpful thoughts in their notebooks, and later they were instructed in grouping these random thoughts under various headings, such as salvation, prophecy, love. Such a study of the Bible had never before been attempted in any medieval school.¹³ Although this special religious instruction was given in addition to the regular curriculum of grammar, logic and philosophy, spiritual training was never confined to the ecclesiastical calendar. Even in the classic trivium the subject matter was always made subservient to the practical use it might have for the pupil in the future. Above

¹³Cf. Hyma, op. cit., pp. 293 ff.

all else the Brethren tried to give to their boys a wholesome, intelligent Christian attitude toward all the problems of life.

For most of a year, his first away from home, young Martin Luther studied in the Cathedral school at Magdeburg under teachers who were members of the Hollbrüder, as he later called them.¹⁴ The municipal school had not yet been established at Magdeburg, and the only school in town that could offer instruction superior to that of Mansfield would probably be that of the Cathedral. The Brethren House had been established in Magdeburg about 1489, and though the Brothers probably did not actually conduct the school they supplied the teachers. At the Chapter House, which he must have visited frequently, Martin would have seen a careful observance of devotional and liturgical exercises, coupled with loving discipline in the school and deeds of service in the city. Nearly forty years later, at the Council of Herford in 1534, Luther spoke with enthusiasm of the Brethren as a witness of Christian freedom and the apostolic life.¹⁵ Magdeburg was the seat of an archbishop and the site of a great cathedral that boasted forty altars and a rich store of relics; the house of the Brethren was near the Cathedral, his father's friend Paul Mosshauer was a cathedral official, and his life in the school was surrounded

¹⁴The derivation of the word is obscure, but it was probably the colloquial low German word for Lollard. Cf. James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925), Vol. I, footnote p. 13.

¹⁵Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 41, footnote.

with the buildings of the cathedral, the cloister and the chapter houses. Prince William of Anhalt was a famous personage about the town and made a deep impression upon Martin: in 1473 the Prince had entered the Franciscan order as a monk and spent the rest of his life begging bread and observing rigorous fasts.¹⁶ The year at Magdeburg was one that strengthened him in the religious convictions he had learned in Mansfield, and offered him far better than ordinary opportunities for advancing in learning.¹⁷

B. Young Manhood at Eisenach

About Easter of 1497 Luther returned to Mansfield. Perhaps he had decided to try his hand at mining copper, or perhaps it had occurred to his parents that they had relatives in Eisenach where there was also a good parish school that had felt the influence of the Brethren from Yssel. Margaret Hutter, wife of the sexton at St. Nicholas, was an

¹⁶In 1533 Luther wrote of coming upon the penitent prince on the Briter Weg: "He had so fasted, kept vigils, and mortified his flesh that he looked the picture of death, mere skin and bones. Whoever looked at him gasped with reverence and must needs have been ashamed of his own [worldly] calling." (Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 17 f.)

¹⁷Boehmer, op. cit., p. 17, says of the Brethren of the Common Life, "There is no reason to attribute great influence to them." It is my opinion that this dismissal of the Brethren is a part of Boehmer's attempt to show that the "dawn of the reformation consciousness" came very late - possibly during the "years of silence," 1513-1517. I do not think that it is necessary or possible to discard all the threads of influence that Luther wove into his thought, thought unconsciously. The similarities of pattern are too many to have been insignificant; no man comes to maturity in pure isolation.

aunt of Martin's mother, and it was to the Hutter house that Martin made his way when he arrived in the city. He was received with kindness, but the family was in no position to keep the young grand-nephew from Mansfield, and at first Martin stayed in one of the hospices of the school and sang in the streets for his meals. This insecurity did not last for long, however, for the wife of the city consul, Heinrich Schalbe, was impressed with his singing, and offered him his board in return for taking care of his little son at school. Martin's duties were to see the boy safely to and from school, generally supervise his behavior during the day, and assist him with his studies. It seems quite possible that he had his room with Ursula Cotta, a near relative of Henry Schalbe, who lived near by. In both families the thoroughgoing piety and goodness of upper class German people prevailed. Mr. Schalbe was devoted to the Franciscan house at the foot of the Wartburg, which Luther later playfully nicknamed the "Schalbe Collegium," saying that Heinrich was "prisoner and servant" of the Barefoot Monks. The boy apparently came to know and admire these ascetics during his three years at Eisenach, for later he invited them to hear his first mass as priest.¹⁸ Mrs. Schalbe delighted in repeating her favorite maxim, "There is no dearer thing on earth than the love of woman if it is enjoyed by one who fears God," and though little is known

¹⁸Fife, op. cit., p. 49.

of the Cotta home it is certain that it is one of evangelical piety. St. Elizabeth, who had given up nobility to become a medieval saint, still cast a spell over the town, which supported three great parish churches, nine monasteries. In the church where Luther sang as a choir boy Elizabeth's great deeds were preserved in the stained glass windows, and no less than three hundred clerical people found a living in this "genuine warehouse and nest of priests" as Luther called it.

Martin Luther spent three years at the parish school of St. George, where Trebonius, the master, invariably saluted the scholars when he entered class in the morning, "For," he said, "future burgomasters, chancellors, doctors and magistrates are among those boys." Here began the first development of Luther's intellectual abilities, and when in his final year he had occasion to practice the speaking, writing and versification of Latin, he left all his classmates behind. It was here in Eisenach in the midst of families, monks and teachers for whom religion was a foremost and intelligent interest in life, that Martin Luther left boyhood behind and became a young man. The transition was marked with all the glowing colors of friendship and happy study. Attitudes and views were established here and in Magdeburg that later wielded powerful influence in his mature thinking. It was here that he learned that the wonderful image of the Virgin and Child which turned away from those who came without money and graciously received the suppliant who presented gifts to

the monastery, was manipulated by a secret mechanism worked by well-informed monks.¹⁹ And, surrounded with all the mystic warmth of the "Devotio Moderna," it was in the "good city Eisenach" that the discovery caused him no pain.

2. Wessel Gansfort, Theologian of the New Devotion

"If I had read his works earlier," wrote Martin Luther as a victorious Reformer in 1542, "my enemies might think that Luther had absorbed everything from Wessel." Luther was beginning to discover with some surprise how deeply his roots were imbedded in the past:

But now my joy and courage begin to increase, and I have not the slightest doubt that I have been teaching the truth, since he, living at so different a time, under another sky, in another land, and under such diverse circumstances, is so consistently in accord with me in all things, not only as to substance but in the use of almost the same words.²⁰

It is not possible to trace any direct links of connection between Wessel Gansfort and Martin Luther; yet such startling coincidence of thought and expression seldom occurs at complete random. These men may have lived at different times, under different skies, and in different lands, as Luther said, but at some point in these two lives there is

¹⁹Mackinnon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 17.

²⁰This quotation is from Luther's "Letter of Recommendation for Gansfort's Letters," which, according to Hyma (op. cit., p. 191), appears in the W. Gansfort Opera, p. 854. To my knowledge the letter does not appear in the Weimar edition of Luther's works.

common heritage.

Wessel Gansfort was born in 1419 or 1420, studied at Cologne and Paris, and spent many years of his student and teaching career with the Brethren of the Common Life. About 1455 he mastered the elements of Greek and Hebrew without the aid of textbooks, and after long study of logic and argumentation discarded scholastic philosophy as empty words and valueless argument. He is said to have been the first to have used the word Jehovah north of the Alps. He quotes from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Demosthenes, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and many others, and from Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Origen and Athanasius among the church fathers. He apparently knew the great medieval mystics Bernard, Bonaventura, Hugo of St. Victor, and the modern scholastics Gerson, d'Ailly and Occam. Though fame and distinction were available to him as a teacher, he preferred the quiet spiritual integrity of the great houses of the Brethren, and spent most of his life at Zwolle, Mt. St. Agnes, Adwert and Groningen. Luther wondered as he wrote of Wessel why Gansfort had remained so little known. "Possibly," he concluded, "it was because he lived free from blood and war, in which particular alone he differs from me."²¹

²¹"Miror autem, quae ingelicitas obsteterit, quo minus in publico Christianissimus hic auctor versetus: nisi in causa fuerit, quod sine bello et sanguine vizerit, quia una re mihi dissimilis est; aut metus Judaeorum nostrorum eum oppresserit, qui suis impiis inquisitionibus in hoc nati

Gansfort was born in Groningen of parents so poor that they determined he must go to work at an early age. A kind woman enabled him to stay in school in the early years, and in 1432 he was sent to the school of the Brothers at Zwolle where he remained for seventeen years. After he had finished the eight grades of the school he became a teacher, copied books and made manuscripts. During these years as student and teacher, Thomas à Kempis was still at St. Agnes, only three miles away. In 1459 Gansfort enrolled as a student of arts at the University of Cologne, in 1460 he was granted the B.A., and in 1462 the master's degree. After a year at Louvain he went to Paris for a year, taught at Cologne and Heidelberg, but in 1468 he returned to Paris where, except for one short trip to Angers, he remained for the next nine years, and studied with Gerson and d'Ailly. Following a short trip to Rome in 1469 he returned to Paris where he met and became a close friend of Reuchlin. Melancthon, who was Reuchlin's pupil, says that Gansfort was expelled from Paris for having attacked the superstitious views of some Parisian ecclesiastical dignitaries, and in 1473 Gansfort received a letter from the Bishop of Utrecht stating:

I have long been aware of your brilliancy as a teacher, and yet I know that there are many who are seeking to destroy you. This shall never be so long as I am alive to protect you. But come to me as quickly

videntur, ut optimos quosque libros faciant haereticos, quos suos Aristotelicos et plus quam haereticos nobis statuunt Christianos, quorum finis Deo vindice jam desinit in confusionem." (Hyma, op. cit., p. 217.)

as possible, that I may talk everything over with you, and may have with me one in whom I delight my soul.²²

During 1473 Gansfort made a quick trip to Italy, chiefly for the purpose of renewing an acquaintance with an old Paris friend who had since become Pope Sixtus IV.

"My son," said the Holy Father as Gansfort was about to leave for the northland again, "ask me what you wish; I will refuse you nothing that is in keeping with my esteem for you and with your circumstances."

Gansfort promptly replied, "Most Holy Father, my kind and just patron, there is nothing with which I would greatly burden your Holiness. I have never sought great honors, as you know."

But Sixtus pressed for a request, and Gansfort answered: "Well, then; I beg you to give me a Greek and a Hebrew Bible from the Vatican Library."

"These shall be given you," Sixtus replied. "But, you foolish man, why do you not ask for a bishopric or something similar?"

"Because," was Gansfort's honest reply, "I do not need it."²³

On his way home with the precious Vatican Bibles under

²²Hyma, op. cit., pp. 198 f.

²³Ibid., p. 199. Some writers regard this story as apocryphal, but Hyma accepts it on the basis of insufficient evidence on the negative side and the testimony of several witnesses who report to have seen parts of Wessel's Bible at Groningen more than a hundred years after his death.

his arm, Gansfort stopped for an inspection of the Platonic Academy of Lorenzo de Medici at Florence, but the unsophisticated wisdom of the men of Zwolle attracted him more than the humanists of Florence.²⁴ During 1474 he made his way from Florence to Venice, and Melancthon says that he stayed in Basel for several months where he taught Greek and Hebrew. Then he reached his native country by traveling down the Rhine, where, shortly after his return, he wrote a treatise, "On the Sacrament of Penance," in which he sums up the opinions he had gathered on many things during his travels and studies:

Knowledge is the interpreter of truth; wisdom is concerned with our welfare. Hence knowledge may be useless and vain. Such is all knowledge which follows truth out of curiosity. Just as the garrulousness of women is foolish because it seeks satisfaction in mere talk, so knowledge seeks merely the truth. But wisdom seeks the benefit from the truth. What I saw when I lived in Cologne and Paris is certainly hateful to God - not the study of sacred literature, but the moral corruption existing in the midst of such studies.²⁵

From 1475 to 1482 Gansfort spent a great deal of his time at the Brother House on Mount St. Agnes, though he was frequently called away by his protector the Bishop of Utrecht, but after 1482 he was to be found at the monastery

²⁴Hyma, op. cit., quotes Gansfort from his Scala Meditationis, Bk. I, Ch. XIII (Opera, p. 212): "Videmus Florentinos posse; Zvvollenses non posse. Mallen ego istorum ignaviam, qual illorum acumen; adeo non interest quo ingenio sis; verum quo consilio utatis et dirigas in finem. Volenti tamen in bonum dirigere, grande quidpiam est exercitatos habere sensus, et potentes ad discretionem boni a mali."

²⁵Hyma, op. cit., p. 201.

of the Brethren in Adwert where he passed the days reading Hebrew to the monks, and explaining the Psalms. Often he would remark that the Latin Vulgate was not very clear in places, and one of the monks would run to bring him the Hebrew text. Famous humanist scholars visited at Adwert for the privilege of talking to Gansfort; Rudolph van Langen came to the House often, and Alexander Hegius and Rudolph Agricola. One day a learned professor from Paris came and after he had discussed several subjects with Gansfort suddenly threw off his doctor's cap and exclaimed with admiration, "You are either a second Anselm, or an angel from heaven, or something I shan't name. Praise the Lord, I have not sought you in vain. Not without reason did the scholars at the Sorbonne call you the 'Master of Contradictions,' and admire and hate you for it."²⁶

Kessel was a radical thinker, but he was neither a revolutionary nor a reformer. He recognized the abuses of the church, but he denounced the sale of indulgences and the deplorable condition of the clergy only in private circles. He loved the quiet of his study, the conversation of learned men and sparring with keen minds. For a brief period before his death he began to doubt the doctrines of the Catholic Church, but the agnosticism did not last long, and on the 4th of October, 1489, he passed away with a confession of faith upon his lips: "Now I know nothing else than Jesus

²⁶Wyns, *op. cit.*, p. 203, citing M. van Rijn, *Gansfort*, pp. 105-08.

Christ and him crucified."²⁷ Most of the written work of Gansfort was destroyed by the Dominicans who burned all they could find, but enough remains to indicate how keen and free, and how akin to Luther's the mind of Brother Gansfort actually was.²⁸

Hessel Gansfort was in agreement with Gerard Groote, the founder of the Brethren, in his essential mysticism: every man is united to God by a part of divinity within his own breast, and God acts on and with that kinship to cause men to believe in Christ, his Savior. His mysticism naturally caused him to discard Aristotle in favor of the Greek mystic Plato. He agreed with Plato's theory that nature is nothing else than the will of God acting with regularity, and that any miracle is simply an extraordinary operation of the divine will. The salvation of man was dependent upon this active will of God, and because man possessed, in mystic manner, a part of that will within himself, he was permitted to cooperate in the divine purpose:

In the greater works of salvation, believers cooperate with God in his operations. In this life by believing, fixing our gaze upon him, loving him, we may truly cooperate with God. And in this God makes us cooperate, because without him we can do nothing but we can do all things in him that strengtheneth us.

²⁷Hyma, op. cit., p. 204.

²⁸According to Hyma the following works were destroyed: 1. Liber notalarum de scripturis sacris et variis scripturarum locis, de creaturis, de angelis, de daemonibus, de anima; 2. Liber alius magnus de dignitate et potestate ecclesiastica, de indulgentiis; 3. Libellus pro nominalibus; 4. De triduo Christi in sepulcro pro Paulo Burgensi Contra Widdelburgensem; 5. Duo libelli pratici in medicinis; 6. Mare Magnum; 7. Liber de futuro seculo; 8. Some letters. (Ibid., p. 410, footnote.)

For through him it is given us both to will and to do. In that cooperation on our part lies our sin and our piety.²⁹

Love becomes for Gansfort the condition of salvation, and faith its proof; the purpose of God is both the first and last word in justification:

By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before him; even if one fulfill the chief commandment by his work; he will not because of this be righteous in God's sight ... Hence it is not our faith - whether it be in Christ or in God who delivered Christ over to be a sacrifice - nor is it the sacrifice of Christ that constitutes our righteousness; but it is the purpose of God who accepteth the sacrifice of Christ, and who through Christ accepteth the sacrifice of Christians.³⁰

Here is a doctrine of predestination closely allied to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles and thoroughly evangelical in its implications.

Whoever believes that he shall be justified by his own works does not know what righteousness is. For to be righteous is to give to everyone his due, but who has ever been able to render his full duty to God, or indeed to man? A person who imagines that he has, possesses no conception of the magnitude of the blessedness of the future, to which no works of his can ever entitle him.³¹

With this kind of mysticism and its dependent view of salvation, Gansfort was forced to depart from the teachings of the church on ecclesiastical doctrines. He adopted a

²⁹Hyma, op. cit., p. 211, citing Gansfort, Opera, p. 713.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 212 f., from the Magnitudine de Passionis.

³¹Ibid., p. 222, from the Magnitudine de Passionis.

mystical view of the Eucharist, believing that Christ's body is now spiritual, and since the spirit cannot eat corporeally, only the inner man can partake of Christ's body in the communion. "To one who remembers his name," Gansfort said, "the Lord Jesus is truly present, not only in his deity, but also in his flesh and blood entire."³² Consistent with his thoroughgoing predestinarian view of the supreme will of God, Gansfort was forced to reject the claim of the pope to authority to bind and loose in heaven any soul not bound or loosed by God. All that the pope could accomplish through excommunication was to exclude a person from the privileges of the church. The same reasoning applied to the problem of indulgences: in granting them the pope could only free a person from the bonds of canon law or from ecclesiastical censure, not from sin or hell.

Nor may even the pope give them away or sell them. And when he commits God's interests in remote provinces to mere fortune as it were - as if he had no concern for them - then, alas, what evils ensue - as one cannot be see about him!³³

Gansfort's reasoning in many of these radical opinions was singularly practical and objective:

How shall the pope judge the faith of a man whose language he is not acquainted with? Hence we can reach the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has kept for himself the task of encouraging, quickening, preserving and increasing the unity of the Church. He has not left it to a Roman pontiff who often

³²Hyma, op. cit., p. 210.

³³Ibid., p. 217, citing Gansfort, Opera, p. 475.

pays no physical attention to it, but thought of it as one Catholic Church, yet to acknowledge its unity as the unity of the faith and of the Head, the unity of the cornerstone, not the unity of its director, Peter, or his successor. For what could Peter in Italy do for those in India endangered by temptation or persecution, except pray for them, even though he had greater power than his successors? ... Hence it is only the internal unity of its one essential Head that is implied in the word of the Apostles' Creed.³⁴

No wonder that a visiting doctor exclaimed one day after he had been arguing with Gansfort, "If these things are so, our entire foundation is false,"³⁵ and that Martin Luther called him "a most Christian author."

3. Gerard Groote and the Founders of the Movement

The Devotio Moderna, which flowered significantly in the theological science of Wessel Gansfort and through its quiet piety and profound educational reforms worked a tremendous influence in the common life of northern Europe, grew out of the efforts of Gerard Groote of Deventer in Holland. Born of well to do parents about 1340 and well educated by the

³⁴Hyma, op. cit., p. 286, citing Gansfort, Opera, pp. 779 f. Cf. Luther, Assertio omnium articulorum per Bullam Leonis V, 1520 (Weimar edition, Vol. VI, p. 127): "Romanus pontifex, Petri successor, non est Christi vicarius super omnes totius mundi Ecclesias ab ipso Christo in beato Petro institutus. Numquam enim fuit super omnes Ecclesias totius mundi Romanus pontifex ... Neque enim super Ecclesias Græciæ, Indiarum, Persidis, Aegypti et Affricæ unquam fuit neque adhuc est." And Gansfort adds: "Dico item Latinorum fidelium, quia tot lingue fidelium ultra fontes Nili, trans Indum Hydaspem, et extra Gangem, quo Latina decreta perringere non possunt."

³⁵Ibid., p. 217.

standards of the fourteenth century, he renounced empty scholasticism and easy living for moderate ascetism and a life of loving service to mankind. He died, loved for the realism of his piety and respected for the breadth of his wisdom, just a century before Martin Luther was born.

Groote left his native Deventer when he was about fifteen for three years of study at the University of Paris where he studied magic, astrology and necromancy in addition to the ordinary scholastic arts. During a dangerous illness he sent for a priest and gave instructions for the burning of his books of occultism. At Paris he was named to be a canon at Cologne where he taught scholastic philosophy and theology. One day while he was watching some games a stranger said to him, 'Do not waste your time upon these vanities; but change your course and become a different man.' Gerard was a man for whom conviction meant appropriate action, and soon he entered Bonikhhausen, a Carthusian monastery at Arnheim, where for three years he led a life of penitence and self-mortification in the best medieval tradition, and eagerly studied the Scriptures in addition to the other textbooks of the House.³⁶

Emerging from the monastery he launched upon a career of public preaching. Thomas à Kempis reports that he preached in the spirit and power of John the Baptist: churches were not

³⁶von Baumer, op. cit., p. 84. von Baumer places chief reliance in his work upon the Vita Gerardi magri, von Thomas von Kempen. The above is to be found in Chapter 4.

large enough to hold the crowds who gathered to hear the Dutch preacher from Monikhausen, and, since he spoke in native Belgian rather than in unintelligible Latin as most preachers did, he often held his congregations spellbound three hours at a time. His sermons emphasized the love of God and His concern for man's salvation, he proclaimed that the kingdom of Heaven consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and he urged that men seek the Spirit with all their strength that they might become participant in the reign of God.³⁷ In his preaching he entirely abandoned the subtleties of the scholastic doctors, as well as the popular arguments of the Dominicans which pictured vividly the terrors of hell and the joys of a material paradise as spurs to salvation. It was not long before the Preaching Brothers had convinced the Bishop of Utrecht to withdraw the troublesome Carthusian's license to preach.

In 1367 Groote and his closest friend, John Cele, visited the monastery of Grunthal near Brussels where the eighty year old mystic Ruysbroeck was prior. Groote was profoundly impressed by Ruysbroeck, who treated his brother monks with a brotherly respect that Groote had not known among the ascetic Carthusians, and when he returned to Deventer he gathered about him a circle of students and educated men who formed a loosely organized brotherhood. They read good books together

³⁷Samuel Kettlewell, Thomas à Kempis and the Brothers of the Common Life (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, 1885), p. 70. Kettlewell's is the older authority in English on the Brethren, and is surpassed only by Hyma's more recent book.

and earned their living by copying and selling manuscripts rather than by begging as was the common custom among the monks.

When the canon of Wirocht heard of the monastic experiment being made at Deventer he resigned his position and became rector of a church in Deventer in order to be near the circle of Brother Gerard. This Florentius Radewin entered the novitiate. He was born in 1340 at Leerdam in South Holland, had studied at Prague, and immediately found himself in sympathy with the purposes of Groote. One day he suggested to Gerard that the brothers form a common fund of the money they earned, and pay the expenses of the entire group from the treasury. Gerard objected, "The begging friars would set themselves against us with every resource at their power." But Florentius urged the point. "It can do no harm," he said, "to begin; perhaps God will crown the undertaking with success."³⁸ Gerard yielded to this kind of argument, and the plan was immediately put into effect. This was the real beginning of the "Brotherhood of the Common Life"; the first house, the Fratrurn Domus, was erected at Deventer about 1384, and by the end of the fifteenth century a chain of houses extended from southern Netherlands to western Prussia. At Deventer a house for sisters was soon organized, and again Groote insisted on his primary principle of self-support; the women were to spin, weave and sew, and were never permitted

³⁸ von Faumer, *op. cit.*, p. 423, citing Jac. Revil Daventria illustrata (1853).

to beg at the doors of other people, or to 'go from house to house out of curiosity, but were persuaded to stay at home and mind their own business, according to the apostolic rule."³⁹

Thomas à Kempis portrays Gerard Groote as a man who denied himself every worldly pleasure, "even the most innocent," who wore coarse garments, ate his food burned and unsalted, and avoided all female associations.⁴⁰ But Groote's self-renunciation was tempered with a concern for other people that most of the medieval ascetics had completely missed. "Although one should avoid too much idle conversation with worldly people," Groote said, "one ought never to shun their presence, but work among them, trying to make them also participants of the joys celestial, far superior as they are to any delights bestowed by our bodily senses."⁴¹ Gerard Groote was far more than an ascetic; he was a profound mystic whose experience of the love of God impelled him to love his fellow men. "Try to love," he counseled, "for in loving you shall find the kingdom of heaven. If once you have found this kingdom you will enjoy righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Ghost. Without these three gifts all outward show of piety, such as fasting and mortification of the flesh, will be of no avail."⁴² The implications of this philosophy were transcendently practical:

³⁹Kettlewell, op. cit., p. 73.

⁴⁰von Raumer, op. cit., p. 56.

⁴¹Hyma, op. cit., pp. 67 f., citing the sermons of Groote.

⁴²Ibid., p. 22; G. Bonet-Maury, Gerard de Groote, p. 24.

Close your eyes to your neighbor's defects, and try to discover his good qualities, which are always worth considering; nay, more than that, they are the only side of his character it is well for to dwell upon. For our soul's health can only be sustained by thoughts of love. And, strange to say, the more love we spend, the more we receive, together with much joy in the spirit. We must also fight melancholy, despondency, dejectedness; these are the enemies of our spiritual existence.⁴³

He preferred the philosophers who made an attempt to solve moral problems: Plato, Socrates, Seneca. "Words merely serve to convey our thoughts to others," he said; "they are servants, not the masters of sense and expression."⁴⁴ He turned sternly against the scholasticism of his day. "Why should we indulge in these endless disputes," he would say, "such as are held at the universities and that about subjects of no moral value whatever?"⁴⁵

But Groote's intensely practical mind would never permit his attack upon current philosophical scholasticism to be merely negative. Though he was never a teacher himself and always distrusted merely formal study, he was deeply interested in education as a positive means of increasing the moral value of life. He found little use in geometry, arithmetic,

⁴³Hyma, op. cit., p. 22; from the Groote Epistolae, ed. X, de Ham, p. 73: "Ante omni videtur mihi vobis congruum, ut sitis laetus spiritualiter; nam tristitia et pusillanimitas et solitudo, si ad multum veniunt, melancholicum faciunt."

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 23; from G. Groote, Prologue to his translation of certain church hymns, in: W. Noll, Geert Groot's Dietsche verstatigen, p. 53, "Want die woreden sijn ende dienen omme die sinne, ende die sinne niet omme die woorde."

⁴⁵Loc. cit.; from the Vita Gerardi Magni of à Kempis, Ch. XVIII, #8.

rhetoric, grammar, poetry and astronomy: "Whatsoever doth not make thee a better Christian is harmful."⁴⁶ He loved books, and one of his biographers says that when he read a book he simply devoured it.⁴⁷ He sometimes kept five copyists busy writing manuscripts for him and all his friends brought books to him whenever they could. Sometimes he would wonder if it were right for him to love books so passionately but he always convinced himself that his was not a thirst after "mere book-learning."⁴⁸ He advised his friends against reading "pagan books," and rejected all the sciences of the ancient philosophers except their ethics, which "may not be so scrupulously shunned"; furthermore, one ought not to read the Scriptures "to penetrate into the mysteries of nature by that means."

Make the Gospel, first of all, the root of all your studies, and the mirror of your life, for in them is portrayed the character of Christ; then the lives and opinions of the fathers, the acts and deeds of the apostles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, to which you may add the devotional works of Bernard, Anselm, Augustine, etc.⁴⁹

With such sentiments the higher studies of the universities found little favor with Groote, and he devoted himself with zeal to the cause of popular education.

Gerard Groote's life was cut short before he could see

⁴⁶ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 561.

⁴⁷ Hyma, op. cit., p. 36; P. Horn, op. cit., p. 355.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hyma, op. cit., p. 36, footnote 153: "semper sum inutilis, semper garrulus, semperque avarus et peraverus librorum."

⁴⁹ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 561, from the Vita of Thomas, Ch. 18.

the results of his practical philosophy and brotherly monasticism. During the wild sweep of plague in Holland in 1384 he attended a number of his stricken friends, and soon he, himself, was dying of the dread disease. "Behold, the Lord is calling me," he said as he died, "the hour of my redemption is close at hand: Augustine and Bernard are waiting at the door."⁵⁰ But before he died he appointed Florentius Radewin his successor, and Deventer soon became the home of a genuinely pious and sensible education that became a model for educators throughout western Europe.

Florentius was a cheerful man with an enthusiasm for the work of the Brethren matched only by his practical abilities. In 1386 he founded a monastery of regular canons at Windesheim near Gouda, and soon followed the erection of the monastery on Mount St. Agnes near Zwolle which was destined to have tremendous influence upon the entire movement. Under his guidance the membership of each house was limited to about twenty brothers who had a common table and a common purse. Each house had several officiating priests, but most of the brothers were either students of divinity or laymen who adhered to no strict rules, took no inexorable vows, and industriously maintained themselves by skilled craftsmanship. When printing was invented it was the Brothers at Gouda who set the first type in Holland. Thomas à Kempis remembered that Florentius

⁵⁰von Raumer, op. cit., p. 55; he died on St. Bernard's birthday.

was filled with all spiritual wisdom, and a knowledge of God in Christ. And though he survived Gerard but fifteen years, in this brief time he founded many brotherly unions.⁵¹

Gerard Zerbolt was the third head of the growing order of the Common Life,⁵² and gave his life to the "diffusion and use of the Bible in the vernacular." His chief work, De Libris Teutonicilibus, expressly insists that laymen should read the Bible in their native tongue. "The books of the Holy Scripture," he says, "were originally composed in the native tongue of those for whom they were immediately designed; and for all others they should be translated."

The Vulgate version is in Latin for this reason alone, namely, that when it was made, the Latin tongue was spoken over the whole of the Roman empire. And the Holy Spirit conferred the gift of tongues upon the apostles, in order that they might be enabled to preach to all the different nations in their different languages.⁵³

He closes the work by citing support from the most distinguished fathers of the early church. Zerbolt insisted that for the same reasons prayer should be offered in the native tongue of the believer, and that no particular language was that spoken by God.

At Zwolle he was reprimanded by those who heard his powerful preaching. "Why do you disquiet us, and why do you

⁵¹von Pauker, op. cit., p. 57; Florentius died in 1400, being fifty years of age.

⁵²He was born in 1367 at Zutphen.

⁵³von Pauker, op. cit., p. 58.

introduce new customs?" they complained. "Give up this kind of preaching and do not trouble and terrify men."

"I cannot willingly suffer you to go to hell," he replied.

"You must, however," retorted the spokesman, "permit us to go to hell in peace."

Zerbolt smiled. "This I cannot do. If you do not wish to hear me, there are others who will willingly listen."⁵⁴

Zerbolt's early death is attributed to the combination of his tremendous labors for the Movement and the long long hours he devoted to study when the active work of the day was done.

A. Thomas à Kempis, Mystic

It is fortunate for the understanding of later generations that the man who most clearly represented the characteristic combination of contemplation with the life of active service in imitation of Christ, and thus most thoroughly exemplified the "New Devotion," was one of the most articulate of the followers of the Movement. "Never be wholly idle," he wrote, "but either be reading or writing or praying or meditating or endeavoring something for the common good."⁵⁵ "He does much that loves much," this spokesman said; "he does much who does well; he does well that serves the community rather than

⁵⁴Kettlewell, op. cit., pp. 180 f.

⁵⁵The Imitation of Christ, Bk. I, Ch. xix.

his own will."⁵⁶ He echoes the teaching of Groot: "We ought to bear with one another," he says in his own way, "comfort one another, help, instruct and admonish one another."⁵⁷ In many ways, Thomas à Kempis represents the flowering of the Common Life.

Thomas was born at Kempen in the year 1380, and at thirteen entered the Brothers' school at Deventer. In 1400 he joined the St. Agnes monastery and for seventy-one years he lived a serene and contemplative life there, dying a decade before Luther was born. The community at St. Agnes was one to encourage young brothers to an active imitation of the goodness of Christ: its life was far more like that of a family than the dreary and many times dissolute conduct of most of the regular monasteries.⁵⁸ There in the congenial and holy atmosphere Thomas von Kempen sketched the lives of both Gerards, Florentius and many other distinguished brothers, and there he composed a book of devotional meditations that through the centuries has lost none of its integrity and directness: the Imitation of Christ. In the Latin, which was its original language, the Imitation has passed through more than two thousand editions, and the French translation has exceeded a thousand reprintings.⁵⁹ "I never remember to have

⁵⁶The Imitation of Christ, Bk. I, Ch. xv.

⁵⁷Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. xvi.

⁵⁸Kettlewell, op. cit., p. 205.

⁵⁹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 58.

seen before such godly men so inflamed with the love of God and of their neighbors," Kempis wrote,

who, while living in the world had not a spark of worldliness about them, and seemed to care nothing for temporal gain or business. For abiding quietly at home, they busied themselves in copying books, especially the sacred Scriptures; and, frequently engaging in devout meditations they obtained comfort and refreshment in the midst of their labors, by having recourse to ejaculatory prayer, or short aspirations of the soul. Early in the morning, they went to church and said the office of the Matins, and during the celebration of Mass they offered up to God the first fruits of their lips and the outpourings of their hearts, and prostrating themselves on the floor they lifted up pure hands and the eyes of their souls to heaven, beseeching God with prayers and tears to be reconciled to them through the all-atoning Sacrifice.⁶⁰

The administration of the House was gentle and thoroughly communistic: the Brothers shared equally in both money and responsibilities.⁶¹ Even the task of writing did not exempt Thomas any more than the others from doing his share of the

⁶⁰Kettlewell, op. cit., pp. 60 f.

⁶¹The Rule of Augustine as observed at Mount St. Agnes and preserved by Kempis is worth recording:

I. To observe the fundamental law of Love: first towards God, then towards our neighbor, according to its just extent, and to imitate the example of the Mother Church at Jerusalem in union of heart, and in sharing with others the goods we possess.

II. To learn the lesson of Humility, according to the most perfect pattern set forth in the life of Christ, and in that of his nearest and most faithful followers; and especially in this, that the greatest among them should be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve.

III. To observe carefully the stated or canonical 'hours' and times of prayer; and to prepare both body and soul for it by due retirement, meditation and fasting.

IV. To take care that the soul and body be both fed at the same time by a prudent appointment of some spiritual entertainment at meals, as by reading some sacred book, or by a

household work. Thomas with the rest took his turn helping the cook in the kitchen, assisting with the marketing, and maintaining the house; even the rector was not excused from the common labor.⁶² In Thomas à Kempis modern readers are privileged to glimpse the freedom of spirit fostered among the Brethren, and the quiet emphasis on religious and educational elements that were becoming influential wherever the Common Life was known.

conference on holy matters, or by singing some devout songs or canticles.

V. To take charge of the sick and infirm wherever they may be found, and so far as we are capable, and to do them all the service in our power for their bodily and spiritual welfare.

VI. To be without any affectation or singularity of dress, and in all the other externals of life; and to regard above all things the acquisition of internal purity and the fashioning of our lives into a conformity with the will of God.

VII. Humbly and affectionately to give and receive fraternal correction and admonition from one another, to confess our faults to one another, gladly to submit ourselves to the reproof or chastisement of our Superior, and resolutely to keep up the true discipline of the Gospel.

VIII. To do all we possibly can for the general good and interest of the Community; to be diligent in our duties and callings, never to be idle, or to wander curiously about, and to be content with the distribution of the common funds, though not altogether so favorable to ourselves as might be expected.

IX. Not to neglect the outward cleanliness and decency, but to look to the due discharge of outward things for the sake of the inward; and to take proper care for the body for the sake of the soul, both in health and in sickness.

X. To be obedient to our superior for God's sake, to faithfully and kindly observe our relative duties towards the other members of the Society, to be ready to ask pardon and to forgive offences in the spirit of Christ our Lord, but not so as to weaken authority.

⁶²Hettlewell, *op. cit.*, pp. 62 ff.

"Let nothing be preferred before the Holy Scriptures,"

Thomas wrote.

Before all the arts, learn to read the Holy Scriptures, to understand them rightly, to believe them firmly, to live godly and righteously, so that through the help of Christ thou mayest happily arrive at life everlasting. For the ignorance of the Divine Law is the mother of error, and the gate of death, the way to lose honor, virtue and salvation. But the Word of God, the doctrine of Christ, is the light of life, the salvation of the world, the gate of heaven, the food of the soul, the joy of the heart above all things to them that love God. Wherefore a learned man when converted said, "To know a great many things without Christ is to know nothing at all; if, however, thou knowest Christ well, that is enough, though thou be ignorant of all besides. For without Him they would be hurtful to thee."⁶³

B. John Cele and His Pupils

If Thomas à Kempis wrought a minor reformation in the monastic ideals of the fifteenth century, John Cele was the Brother who spread the principles of the Devotio Moderna throughout Holland and Germany by working a reform in the methods of popular education. Cele was the most intimate friend that Gerard Groote ever had, and was at the head of the municipal school at Zwolle for forty-two years. It was Groote who persuaded the reluctant Cele to see the desperate need of men and women for a real education possessing religious qualities, and who called him back to the work when he had decided to retire to the less strenuous life of the monastery. Groote thought that the training of future

⁶³Kettlewell, op. cit., pp. 348 ff.; no documentation is given, and though I have been unable to locate the passage, I feel certain it is from the Imitation.

teachers and clergymen was especially important. "Now are these men to instruct the masses," he would often remark, "if they have no knowledge to give, their brains being empty of all sound learning?"⁶⁴ It was Groote who urged Cele to go to Prague to study at the university that he might be better prepared to continue his teaching at Zwolle, and who found a substitute to carry on for him during his absence.

Under the influence of Groote's philosophy, John Cele used his native ability and long teaching experience to make his school at Zwolle the home base of a widely influential educational method. The harmonious development of the pupil's mental and spiritual abilities became the fundamental aim of his teaching. A thoroughly practical religion was made the central point for the orientation of the entire curriculum. The Bible and the Church Fathers were taught side by side with the philosophers and poets. When Bible passages were studied, there was opportunity for general discussion in which each member of the staff could freely express opinions as long as he did not indulge in impractical disputes and arguments, and to which the school boys and townspeople were invited. All courses were given in the vernacular of the people, and they were welcome at any of the classes. The Bible should be studied and understood by everybody, for everyone was created in the image of God, and it was from the Scripture that people could learn of the virtue

⁶⁴Wysa, op. cit., p. 37; citing G. Groote, Epistolae, J. Clarisse, ed., pp. 22-24.

and love that were essential to the achievement of a society of peace and order. Such instruction, it was Cele's opinion and experience, was of far more value than all the impractical disputes engaged in by the learned doctors of Paris and Cologne.

Cele's aim, however, was a well balanced intellectual training, and he did not discard a single subject from the general curriculum then in vogue. His students studied the scholastic philosophers, and were acquainted with geography, astronomy, logic, and medicine; if a pupil needed any of these subjects for the achievement of a practical end, he was encouraged to study them further. It was wise to examine everything, Cele taught, but men must learn to select the best and most useful; if a boy were to become a priest some day, he would need to know very much about geometry, he argued, and if he were to be a farmer he would find little use for medicine.⁶⁵

Pupils in Cele's schools were taught to pray both in Latin and Dutch, and Cele himself never undertook anything without prayer. "Cele himself," wrote one of his pupils, "as a true imitator of Christ, never taught us anything which he had not previously practiced, in order that he might be our example."⁶⁶ The constitution of the House at Zwolle

⁶⁵Hyma, op. cit., pp. 92 ff.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 93; citing J. Busch, Chron. Wind., p. 213: "Ut autem exemplar et formam bone vite et sancte conversationis seipsum preberet discipulis, incepit a seipso Christum in hoc imitatus non docens sermone que prius opere non fecisset."

states Cele's educational aim:

Toward this end we must direct all our spiritual exercises: prayer, meditation, reading, manual labor, watching, fasting - in short, the harmonious development of our internal and external powers.⁶⁷

Cele merely substituted the word "teaching" for "spiritual exercises."

Gerard Groote, Wessel Gansfort and John Cele each made application in his own thinking of the principle voiced by Occam in opposition to the method of Aristotle: "It is always best to reduce things to their simplest elements." For Cele this meant pruning away from his curriculum all dead formalism. Of what use was the study of Canon Law, medicine and astronomy to the average school boy who had not yet mastered Latin grammar and the principles of simple arithmetic?⁶⁸ He divided his school into eight classes so that the boys might study only that for which they were prepared, and provided specialists to instruct in the two upper classes. The division of a common school into grades, familiar though it may be today, was a pedagogical discovery in 1400. Order in the schoolroom, it was Cele's principle, was to be a result of the personality of the teacher and the quality of the subject matter rather than of physical intimidation. Any form of punishment was too severe in the school at Zwolle if one had not first exhausted all the ways of correction suggested by sympathy and love. Because he was so

⁶⁷Hyma, op. cit., p. 116.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 92; citing M. Schoengen, Die Schule von Zwolle, p. 97.

interested in the students themselves, Cale was quick to recognize that no two boys were exactly alike. No artificial time limit was set for the completion of the eight classes, and boys advanced when they were able. Those who could afford it were expected to pay for their room and board at the Brethren House, which was the school dormitory; the poorer boys were sent out to the homes of local citizens where they could earn their board and room.⁶⁹ All of the boys were expected to make some payment of tuition, but both the amount and the time were equated with the boy's resources.

One feature of the Cale teaching method was the rapiarium, a technique that became universally adopted. Each student was urged to make a collection of excerpts from the books studied and the lectures heard. Cale himself selected useful passages from the Scripture and read them to the class in a loud voice, as one of his students reports:

for he wanted his pupils to have the leading events and the most striking passages found in the Epistles and the Gospels collected in one copybook, a theological excerpt-book, in which the most useful thoughts found in the sacred writings were gathered in brief extracts. This would enable them more easily to commit such passages to memory.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Kettlewell, op. cit., pp. 47 f.

⁷⁰Hyma, op. cit., p. 96; citing J. Busch, Chron. Wind., p. 207: "Et tunc etiam notabilia quedam dicta sanctorum in futurum clericis profutura per totam scolarum pronuntiavit singulis ad sua rapiaria cuncta scribentibus. Unde epistolas et evangelia in festis per annum occurrentia omnes habere voluit et rapiarium theologicale, quo nucleum scripture sacre brevibus in verbis colligerent, et ita successive Dei noticiam timorem et sapientiam novis testis memorie facilius commendarent."

The inevitable result of Cele's reforms was that his pupils made more rapid progress at the university than most other students, and boys began to come to Zwolle from districts far beyond the Yssel valley. At one time twelve hundred boys were studying under Cele, and between the years of 1374 and 1417 thousands of pupils were educated at Zwolle. From Cologne, Trier, Louvain, Utrecht, Brabant, Flanders, Westphalia, Holland, Saxony, Cleves, Gelderland and Frisia they came, and from Zwolle they went out again to all parts of Europe. "Paris, Cologne, Erfurt and the Roman Curia testify how many learned men Cele's school sent out," is the comment of a contemporary.⁷¹ The one chief cause of his fame, says Schoengen, the archivist at Zwolle, was his maxim: "The kingdom of heaven consisteth not in knowledge and speech, but in work and virtue,"⁷² but by his four decades of creative teaching at Zwolle John Cele originated and firmly established what is now called the secondary school, and it was his school that served as model for those of Hegius, Agricola, Melancthon, and all their followers in the sixteenth century. Deeply impressed by both the life and the teaching methods of John Cele, his pupils went out to recreate them throughout Europe. Their adaptation to the needs of the cities in which they worked was free and independent, but the fundamental influence of Cele and the New Devotion never left them. At Cassel the

⁷¹Hyma, op. cit., p. 97, citing J. Busch.

⁷²Ibid., p. 93, citing Die Schule von Zwolle, p. 70.

Brothers taught school in their own house. In Delft they sent boys to the public school for instruction, at first, but later they were the teachers in the public school itself. A boarding school was founded at Doesburg, while at Gouda, Ghent and Grammont they had schools of their own, as well as the more distant cities of Liege, Warburg, Rostock and Magdeburg. At Mechlin they formed part of the local school board. At Amersfoort they paid the salary of the rector.⁷³

(1) Alexander Hegius

Student of Cele, friend of Wessel Gansfort, and most famous educator of transalpine Europe, was Alexander Hegius, one of these boys trained at Zwolle. Hegius continued Cele's independent approach to the problems of education, and early began to advocate textbook reforms. He said that the ancient Medulla was no longer worth reading, and in one of his books gives a list of the alterations that should be made in current textbooks of Latin grammar. An essay appropriately called Invectiva was a plea for better textbooks. At Emmerich, where Hegius taught from 1475 to 1483, he began the study of Greek, regularly attending the classes of Rudolph Agricola, many years his junior. Though he began Greek too late to master the language as well as many of his contemporaries, Greek soon became one of his educational passions. "Whoever desires to understand grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, history and the

⁷³Hyma, op. cit., p. 124.

Holy Scriptures, he told his scholars, "must learn Greek. For to the Greeks we are indebted for everything."⁷⁴ To Hammerich he attracted fifteen hundred pupils, and his fame as a teacher reached the cities of Trier, Cologne, Strassbourg, Liege, and Magdeburg. In 1483 he was appointed rector of the school so closely allied with the Brethren at Deventer, and during his fifteen years there his fame became paramount among teachers. Over two thousand boys flocked yearly to Deventer to sit under the guidance of Alexander Hegius. Under the influence of his studies in Greek of the classics he became a great humanist, but the moderating touch of the Brethren never deserted him, and he never lost his love for the use of the vernacular as did so many of his contemporaries who came wholly under the spell of ancient Greece and Rome. Throughout his teaching career he bore the characteristic stamp of Common Life education: all learning is futile which is acquired at the expense of piety.

Alexander Hegius died in 1498 and was buried on December 27th in the church of St. Lebuin, near the body of Florentius Radewin.⁷⁵ From 1474, when he had begun teaching in the Brethren School at Wesel, he had been in constant association with the New Devotion, and as a boy he had received his first

⁷⁴von Haumer, op. cit., p. 72.

⁷⁵loc. cit. von Haumer says that Hegius was born in 1420 (p. 71); Hyma (op. cit., p. 125) settles for 1433. These are the two standard opinions in the matter, and there appears to be little choice between them.

instruction from the Brethren of Zwolle. Yet he remained free enough in his thinking to be among the first in northern Europe to espouse the cause of humanism; this independence was the genius of the education fostered by the Common Life. His written works are scarcely known;⁷⁶ as with all great teachers, his fame rests chiefly on his distinguished pupils. Erasmus, nine years old, entered the school of Hegius in 1476. John Murnellius, first a soldier and then a scholar with Hegius, was driven from Cologne in 1498 because he opened verbal fire on the barbarous Latin of the Colognese, and was sent by Hegius to Munsterk where he taught for fourteen years. In 1514 he was appointed rector of the school in Alcmear, and when the school was burned out he returned to Deventer to die in 1517. He wrote a great deal, both for the promotion of classical learning and for the overthrow of his favorite enemy, "barbarism." John Caesarius of Juliers was also driven from Cologne because of his attack on the outmoded schoolbooks used in the city schools, and in 1504 became a teacher of Greek under Rudolph Lange, another Hegius pupil. Later Count Ruensar

⁷⁶Cf. von Raumer, *op. cit.*, p. 72, footnote: "Alexander Hegii, artium magistri, Gymnasiarchae quondam Daventriensis, philosophy, presbyteri, utriusque linguae docti, Dislogi," printed at Deventer, 1503. Subjects of the dialogues are:

1. De scientia et eo quod scitur.
 2. De tribut animae generibus.
 3. De incarnationis mysterio.
 4. Dialogus physicus.
 5. De sensu et sensili.
 6. De arte et inertia.
 7. De rhetorica.
 8. De moribus.
 9. Parrago cue addita Invectira in modod significandi.
- Plus two letters.

induced him to return to Cologne where he taught until he was ninety years old, and edited Pliny's natural history and several other books for use in the schools. Joseph Morlesius became rector of a school in Herford, and later teacher of the learned Peter Mosellanus. Timann Caemener was instilled with a "passionate love of classical literature which did not even shrink from martyrdom" by Hegius, and was rector in Munster from 1500 to 1530.

(2) Rudolph Lange

Rudolph Lange was born at Munster in 1439 and received his first training from Hegius in Deventer. Later Lange received his master's degree at Erfurt University, traveled in Italy, and became a teacher in the college at Munster. At Cologne he, too, opposed the methods of the Academy when it maintained an adherence to the old school books such as the versified Doctrinale of Alexander. Italian scholars formed the court of appeals in this quarrel, and decided in Lange's favor. He completely organized the school at Munster, and secured the assistance of Hegius-trained Cremoner and Wermellius on the teaching staff. For many years he advised the city school on textbooks and curriculum and shared his own large library with both teachers and pupils. Luther's theses appeared when he was an old man, and when he read them he said: "The time is at hand when the darkness shall be removed from the church and from the school, when purity shall return to the churches and a pure Latinity to the schools."

When he died in 1519 he was eighty years old and provost of Munster.⁷⁷

(3) Hermann Busch

Hermann Busch was a nephew of Lange, and when he came to the school of Hegius at Deventer as a boy, he already knew the elements of Latin. "You have a poetical head," said Agricola to him; "you are destined to be a poet." Busch followed Agricola to Heidelberg and there studied Cicero with great enthusiasm; later he visited Tübingen and made the friendship of Simler who was later Melancthon's teacher. In 1480 he went with his uncle Rudolph Lange to Italy, and in 1486 was expelled from Cologne, nemesis of so many Brethren. For several years he traveled through Germany, England and France, giving lecture series at the famous universities; his lectures at Gripswalk were attended by Bugenhagen, at Erfurt he brought about a formal banishment of medieval school books, in Leipzig Spalatin was among his pupils. He taught with the Brethren at Wesel for a decade, and in 1522 went to Wittenberg where he studied the Bible and the Church Fathers with the Reformers. On their advice he was invited by Philip of Hesse to the University of Marburg to take the chair of history in the new university there, and in 1529 he wrote on the authority of the Bible.⁷⁸

⁷⁷von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 75 f.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 76 ff.

(4) Rudolph Agricola

Of the two men who seem to have been impressed least by their contact with the New Devotion, one was Pope Adrian VI who was at Deventer as a boy; the other was Rudolph Agricola, who but touched the charmed circle. Rudolph was born in Bafloe near Groningen in 1443, and his proper vernacular name was Hussmann. It is not known where he received his earlier instruction, but it is generally assumed that he had some contact with the Brother's school at Groningen; he later studied at the University of Louvain where he became a Magister artium and learned French, and at Paris where he studied under Wessel Gansfort among others. In 1476 he traveled to Ferrara where he studied the ancient classics under Theodore Gaza de Guarini, copied manuscripts, and won the admiration of the Italians for his Latin poems as well as for his accomplished singing to his guitar. He spent some time at the court of the Duke of Brussels on behalf of his native city, and from thence was called to Antwerp to superintend a school and give lectures. But Agricola was a free spirit, and a long series of excuses for declining the Antwerp offer could not conceal the real reason in Agricola's heart:

I conduct a school? What time would there be left for study? What repose for invention and production? Where should I find one or two hours daily for the interpretation of an author? The boys would claim the larger portion of my time, besides wearing my patience to that degree that whatever leisure time I could secure would be required, not for study, but

rather to catch my breath and to compose my thoughts.⁷⁹

However, Agricola's attitude toward the schools was not altogether cynical, and in the course of his contacts with the students at the university in Heidelberg he developed a definite philosophy of education. Three things, he said, were important for study: first, to apprehend aright; then, to hold the matters so apprehended fast in the memory; and lastly, to cultivate the faculty of producing something in one's self. To apprehend aright the student should apply himself closely to both the whole meaning and the parts of the subject at hand, "yet not with such rigor as to puzzle ourselves over an obscure passage, not passing on until we have mastered that; but we ought rather to read farther, trusting that afterwards, through the explanations of a friend or otherwise, the difficulty will be cleared up." The memory should be strengthened, Agricola advised, by deliberate and frequent recall. Most important for Agricola, and the point most often forgotten by the arid classicists of his day, was the third requirement: production. "If we create nothing," said Agricola, "all our learning will remain dead within us." Learning should not be stored up in the memory, but arranged and analyzed so that we should "always have it at hand, and be able to bring it forth." Agricola was disappointed in the students at Heidelberg, who "squandered all their time on sophistical nonsense," and, reminiscent of his training with

⁷⁹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 67.

the Brothers, he insisted that "ethical inquiries" are of far more importance than "researches into the natural world."⁸⁰

Thus, through the minds and work of its thousands of students, the Order grew. The Brothers sent out so vast a host of scholars that it is impossible to number them. Practically all the larger schools in Western Germany were reorganized under their influence, and through them the teaching of Cels and Hegius was felt in cities where there was no organized chapter house. Though their work was not confined to the schools, they became known as the fratres scholares. At Windesheim the Brothers secured standard copies of the Vulgate Bible from Paris, from Bethlehem and Rome, and for several years compared and corrected until they produced a copy that ultimately became the basis for the Vulgate officially adopted by the Church at the close of the fifteenth century.⁸¹ Their influence was felt most widely, however, in their gift of the Bible to many of the common people in the vernacular. Their work was the beginning of the Christian popular education that is a fundamental corollary of the Reformation: Christianity and its source book are for the common people, and they must be prepared to read and interpret for themselves.

⁸⁰Ovon Kaumer, op. cit., pp. 68 ff., citing (and quoting) a letter from Agricola to his friend Barbarinus at Antwerp, written in connection with the invitation to the school there, in 1482.

⁸¹Hyma, op. cit., p. 155.

4. Luther and the New Devotion

Martin Luther was never a member of the Brethren of the Common Life, and it is not possible to establish direct connections between the Brethren and the Reformer; however, the infiltration of the Devotio Moderna into the life and thought of the people of central Germany was significant and widespread, and Luther's early life crossed and recrossed the quiet, undocumented threads of influence woven by the Brothers into the total texture of German religious and educational life. The year at Magdeburg was short and Luther was but a boy; perhaps he never met the names of Groote and Cele, but he encountered their philosophy and their educational system. It seems possible that as a student he later read some of the works of Gerard Groote in manuscript form, for many copies can still be found in practically all the large European libraries, even at Rome and Vienna, and the national library at Berlin preserved a copy of some of Groote's works that once belonged to a monastery in Erfurt; the Brethren supported themselves through their industry as copyists. Hyma has uncovered the remark of Luther in 1515 or 1516: "Nowhere have I found such a clear explanation of original sin as in the treatise of Gerard Groote, 'Blessed is the man.'⁸² The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis was the most popular book of the time; it hardly seems possible that as a student Luther

⁸²Hyma, op. cit., p. 220.

could have not known of it. He apparently became acquainted with the writing of Gansfort at Wittenberg in 1521 or 1522 when Hinne Fode, rector of the school of the Brethren at Utrecht, personally brought the Farrago of Gansfort to Luther and asked him to have it published. The work was printed at Basel in 1522 with Luther's letter of introduction in which the Reformer said that the coincidence in their thought and expression was so striking that some might claim that he had "absorbed everything from Wessel." Furthermore, it is not without significance that the devotional movement, with which Luther found so much in common, was deeply interested in the welfare of the common people. Though the nexus may have been wholly unconscious and entirely subterranean, the New Devotion, subtly pervading and effectively moulding the religious life of the German people, provided the ground on which Luther took his stand and met his crises: the roots of the Reformation were sunk in the past, deep in the educational tradition of the Common Life.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW SCHOLASTICISM

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CHAPTER III

THE NEW SCHOLASTICISM

1. The German Universities

A university career in the late Middle Ages was an exciting and sometimes dangerous life. Not only the sons of the lesser nobility who later became dashing and ribald feudal knights, but the future clergymen who were one day to write gigantic summae and tender hymns to the Virgin, lightened their days of reading and writing with wine and women; one of the students' songs that accompanied the latter went as follows:

We in our wandering,
Blithesome and squandering,
Tara, tantara, teino!
Eat to satiety,
Drink to propriety,
Tara, tantara, teino!
Laugh till our sides we split,
Rags on our hides we fit,
Tara, tantara, teino!

Jesting eternally,
Quaffing infernally,
Tara, tantara, teino!
Brothers catholical,
Man apostical,
Tara, tantara, teino!

Clasped on each other's breast,
 Brother to brother pressed,
 Tara, tanrara, teino!¹

While he was attending the university at Erfurt, Martin Luther often went to Mansfield on vacations. It was a three day walk, and since such a journey was beset with all of the usual uncertainties involved in traveling in those uncertain days, young Luther always carried a sword. Not far from Erfurt on one of these homeward journeys he accidentally cut the artery of his thigh; perhaps the accident is an indication that he was not skilled in the use of his dangerous weapon. It was some time before a surgeon could be found and the injured student carried back to his quarters in Erfurt, and by that time he had lost both a great deal of blood and consciousness. But even such an experience did not dampen the young student's characteristic enthusiasm for life: he spent the weeks of convalescence learning to play the flute!²

Medieval undergraduates were much younger than their modern counterparts, and the regulations that were heaped upon them were staggering in their stringency. However, the close supervision of university students was more a reflection of the traditionally legalistic attitudes of the church, with which the universities were closely allied, rather than of an attempt to keep the young men on their best behavior. Discipline

¹John Herman Pandell, Jr., The Making of the Modern Mind (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 116; quoting from the original in J. A. Symonds, Five, Women and Song.

²Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 30.

was considered an end in itself in the age in which ascetism had long passed its bloom: the university dictated that breakfast should be served at ten o'clock and dinner at five, the clerical cut of the student uniform, the hours of instruction, review, rising, retiring and exercise.³ There were special rules prohibiting noise, loafing, carrying weapons, and introducing women into dormitories, but there were also ways in which the regulations could be circumvented.

Though the medieval university student was usually under twenty, he was far more than a modern school boy being taught Aristotle and disputing sophisms. Life expectancy was short, men matured early, and one of the most characteristic features of the medieval university was its incredible independence from a variety of standards. Students in a university town were subject to a different statute of laws than the citizens of the towns, and under them exercised a great deal of freedom. The leaser of a house to a student could not evict him in Tübingen simply because he brought prostitutes there and thereby injured the value of the property; this sort of behavior should have been assumed when the landlord rented the house to a student. Townspeople prohibited their daughters from becoming friendly with the students in the town, for, as a contemporary observed, "when a student talks with such a one, it is not to be presumed that he is repeating the lord's Prayer." On the other hand, one of the most disgraceful acts

³Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities and University Study (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 19.

a student could commit was to sell his books unless forced to do so by inevitable necessity, for he became, "ipso facto," like a soldier who has lost his arms in battle." Because of the unusual circumstances of their career, students were granted dispensation to study their lessons on feast days and in church, though some contemporaries wondered if perhaps the students did not attend church more to see the girls than to concentrate on their books.⁴

The universities, astonishing home of medieval intellectual life, came to Germany from Paris where the university had been founded in the early years of the thirteenth century. Schools in the cultural hinterlands of Europe madly followed the lead of all that Mistress Paris did, her theological-philosophical speculations, the content of her courses, her curriculum, her organization, and her immoralities. The House of Luxemburg established a university at Prague in 1348, and seventeen years later Vienna became the seat of the new school of the Hapsburgs. Owing to the disintegration of the University of Paris during the schism of the church between Avignon and Rome, the University at Heidelberg was founded in 1385, and the cities of Cologne and Erfurt set up their own schools of university grade in 1388 and 1392. In compensation for the loss of the University of Prague by German culture as a result of the Hussite revolutions, the dukes of

⁴Lynn Thorndike, University Records and Life in the Middle Ages (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 390 ff.: Selection #174, Steno Bielke, Commentatio de Academiis (Tubingen, 1609), pp. 28-35.

Saxony founded a university in Leipzig in 1409, and the city of Rostock set up a municipal university in 1419. These schools, all of the stature of a university studium generale, were not ecclesiastical institutions, and were generally governed by secular authorities. With the exceptions of Cologne and Erfurt, the seven German universities of this early period of expansion are still in existence. About the middle of the fifteenth century the humanistic movement, sweeping north from Italy, called into existence nine new universities: Griefswald in 1456, Friburg and Basel four years later, Inglostadt and Treves in 1472, Tübingen in 1477, Wittenberg in 1502 and Frankfort-on-Oder in 1506.⁵

Most of these German universities were brought deliberately into existence by municipal and church authorities who were interested in maintaining a native German culture; in France and Italy universities usually sprang spontaneously into life about the personality of a great teacher or the funds of a private patron, but in Germany the ruler or city provided building and endowments, the municipality granted the universities independent authority over its own members, exemption from taxes and civil duties, and the university leaders petitioned the pope or emperor for official sanction to teach, hold examinations and confer degrees. Most of the schools became legally established in time, but frequently the official recognition was delayed, for though a few German

⁵Paulsen, op. cit., pp. 14 f.

universities sometimes numbered a thousand students, most of them gathered only a couple of hundred supposita. Tradition tells of thousands of students at Vienna and Prague, and Eobanus Hessus once had an audience of fifteen hundred when he lectured on the poets at Erfurt, but in their early years the German universities were never as largely attended as the older schools at Paris, Bologna and Oxford. However, many German young men, sons of tradesmen and artisans and middle-class burghers, found careers in law, medicine and church opened to them by these native German schools. Martin Luther could hardly have hoped to secure a university education if he had had to go to Paris for it, and had it not been for these brave little German universities there could not have been a popular Reformation in Germany.⁶

These municipal universities of Germany, however, were no better schools than the huge and ancient ones of Southern Europe which they copied, and one sometimes wonders how students in them learned anything at all. There was a tremendous barrier between students and teachers: "Depart from the classrooms, ye inept and unfit," roared the teachers at Tübingen, "who have your brains in your heels and measure all virtue by strength of body," and passed regulations against those who, "while they snore and wallow in bed, order their servants to perform the vicarious tasks of writing and

⁶Cf. Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), Vol. II, part I, p. 214.

listening in the auditorium."⁷ At Ingolstadt Conrad Celtes, one of the younger German humanists, consumed so much of his time scolding his students, accusing of madness and stupidity the men who paid his fees, that they presented him with a petition of complaint: "Either you lack understanding - a shameful thing in a doctor - or you think us unworthy of your learning, which is incredible," they wrote.

This we might have borne with better grace, but for the fact that you, yourself, abound in the faults of which you accuse us. For what of the fact that, while you carp about us, you, yourself are so torpid from dissipation that in private conversation your drowsy head droops to your elbow like a figure eight.

If first, as befits you, you clear yourself of the fault you impute to us, you will make us more diligent by your diligence, which has now long been lacking, if you can conquer and overcome your dislike of study and tardiness in work. If you do less, we shall have to take more stringent measures.⁸

Most of the counseling, however, was done by the teachers:

"Let the student be diligent in his first year," it was often said, "more diligent in the second, most diligent in the third, and even more diligent in the fourth."⁹

Moreover, Professor Celtes himself was probably not in an ideal position as a member of a university faculty. The staff was never large, and was usually comprised of three or four theological doctors, three to six jurists, and one or two medical men. The older lecturers may have had a small fixed

⁷Thorndike, op. cit., p. 391, #174.

⁸Ibid., pp. 366 f., #163.

⁹Ibid., p. 392, #174.

salary or have held an ecclesiastical benefice, but the younger men were without salary and depended upon the personal lecture and examination fees paid by the students. In the higher faculties this was an unhappily uncertain source of income, for most of the students left the university without even obtaining the lowest degree of baccalarius artium, and a student could drop or change his course almost at will. The subject matter on which the professor was expected to lecture was definitely fixed, and his task was simply to hand down to his students a certain inflexible sum of knowledge. No professor was expected to supplement the course with the achievements of his own wisdom, and thus came about the incredible elaboration and systematization of the body of natural reason that gave rise to the aridities of the medieval "school men." In the philosophical faculties lectures were offered on certain books in routine order, and the distribution of lecture chores was made among the faculty members by the selective method of drawing lots.¹⁰

2. University Teaching and Study

"Let not the student try to teach himself before he has learned much or he will learn late and badly," cautioned a professor a century after Luther had graduated from university. "The spoken word of the professor has some occult quality that penetrates deeper into the mind of the hearer and

¹⁰Cf. Paulsen, op. cit., pp. 19-23.

makes a greater impression on the memory than private reading.¹¹ The teacher in the medieval university was faced with an almost impossible task according to modern standards. His students possessed, at best, but meager portions of the text of Virgil or Cicero. They had no notes, no grammars, no lexicons, or dictionaries. Dictation, which may in some cases have achieved the form of a sort of oral instruction, was made absolutely necessary; the lecturer was forced to dictate quotations, explain all the geographical and historical illustrations, in addition to analyzing the grammatical structure word by word in accordance with scholastic procedure. If he were teaching the classics he had to know the full mythology of the Pantheon, the biography of the author, and every technical innuendo of an almost forgotten language. His students came to his lectures equipped with little more than pen and paper, and after long and tedious hours they carried away a transcript of everything he had said.¹² It was an inefficient, time-consuming and curiosity-wasting effort.

The content of the courses was hardly more challenging than the method in which they were taught. Grammar was the basis of the entire liberal arts course, even in the universities. The classic writings of the ancient Greeks were read,

¹¹Thorndike, *op. cit.*, pp. 391 f., #174; Steno Bielke, in Commentatio de Academicis (Tübingen, 1609).

¹²S. S. Laurie, Studies in the History of Educational Opinion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 35 f.

to be sure, but word for word and ending by ending. Verbalism reasserted itself and it became rank intellectual heresy to question the authority of Aristotle. In Porphyry's Isagoge, an introduction to Aristotle's philosophy in every medieval student's hands, the doctrine of ideas over which Plato and Aristotle differed is introduced as follows:

Next, concerning genera and species, the question, indeed, whether they have substantial existence, or whether they consist in bare intellectual concepts only, or whether, if they have substantial existence, they are corporeal or incorporeal, and whether they are separable from the sensible properties of things (or particulars of sense) or are only in those properties and subsisting about them, I shall forbear to determine. For a question of this kind is a very deep one and one that requires a longer investigation.¹³

Students were expected to copy what was given them, and to cram it up in their memory for use in examinations or the disputations; there was no place for the use of their reason. It is related of an old professor that when a student once called his attention to the rumor that spots had been seen on the sun, he replied: "There can be no spots on the sun, for I have read Aristotle twice from beginning to end, and he says the sun is incorruptible."¹⁴

How much effect the classical training of the universities actually worked in the thought and living of the students it is impossible to know. Because of the ease with which

¹³Lewis F. Anderson, History of Common School Education (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), pp. 173 f.

¹⁴Samuel G. Williams, The History of Medieval Education (Syracuse: C. W. Bardeen, 1903), p. 142.

the graduates of this schooling quoted accurately and with point from the ancients it is possible that the effect was more significant than now seems possible. The open aim of the Renaissance was the perfectly rounded man who could paint, ride a horse, fight a duel, woo a lady and build a bridge with equal poise and grace. Morgante, the noble creature of Renaissance Utopia, was made to write to his son Pentagranel urging him to learn the languages perfectly, have a "ready memory" of history, the rules of astronomy, and the texts of civil law.

Now in the matter of the knowledge of the works of nature, I would have thee to study that exactly; so that there be no sea, river or fountain of which thou dost not know the fishes; all the fowls of the air; all the several kinds of trees and shrubs, whether in forest or orchard; all the sorts of herbs and flowers that grow upon the ground; all the various metals that are hid within the bowels of the earth; together with all the diversity of precious stones that are to be seen in the orient and southern parts of the world ... then fail not most carefully to peruse the books of the great Arabian and Latin physicians; not despising the Talmudists and Chabbists; and by frequent anatomies get thee the perfect understanding of the microcosm, which is man. At some hours of the day apply thy mind to the study of the Holy Scriptures; first in Greek the New Testament with the Epistles of the Apostle; and then the Old Testament in Hebrew. In brief, let me see thee an abyss and bottomless pit of knowledge.¹⁸

And what could be the purpose of all this tremendous amassing of information? Simply this:

From henceforward, as thou growest great and becomeest a man, thou must part from this tranquillity of study; thou must learn chivalry, warfare and be

¹⁸ Laurie, op. cit., condensed from pp. 49-52.

exercised in the field, the better thereby to defend our house and our friends ... maintain publicly theses and conclusions in all arts against all persons whatever by haunting the company of learned men, both in Paris and otherwise.¹⁶

It is quite clear that Gargantua had not felt the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life, who devoted all learning to the service of man and love of God. The universities of Germany, through their thoroughgoing scholasticism of method and content in education, did not produce many Pantagruels to grace the stage of history.

The great, original contribution of the medieval universities to the history of education, and to the dry routine of the medieval scholar as well, was the correlative disputation. Weekly, in most universities, the entire school assembled in the Aula or great hall, with the masters and students all in cap and gown, and the faculty sitting, like a supreme court, on the speakers' platform. The procedure varied, but the end product was the same: a master or the university rector proposed a set of logical theses, and these were attacked with as much rhetorical skill and fireworks as possible by faculty or students.¹⁷ In his contemporary life of Thomas à Becket, William Fitzstephen describes a disputation in London:

Some use demonstrations, others topical and probable arguments; some practice Enthimems, others are better at perfect Syllogism, some for a show dispute, and for exercising themselves, and strike like adversaries; others for truth, which is the grace of

¹⁶Laurie, op. cit., pp. 49-52.

¹⁷Paulsen, op. cit., p. 24.

perfection. The disassembling Sophisters turn Verballists and are magnified when they overflow in speech; some are also enrept with deceitful arguments ... The boys of different schools wrangle together in versifying, and canvass the principles of Grammar, as the rules of the Preterperfect and Future tenses. Some after an old custom of pretending, use Rhimes and Epigrams; these can freely grip their fellows, suppressing their names with a festinate and railing liberty, these cast out most abusing jests, and with Socratical witnesses either they give a touch at the vices of Superiors, or fall upon them with satirical bitterness. The hearers prepare for laughter, and make themselves merry in the meantime.¹⁸

Fitzstephen's use of the terminology of the joust in describing these verbal encounters is not accidental. The disputations probably originated as a useful teaching technique in view of the lack of books, and were intended to be both a means of publication of new ideas and suppression of unwarranted novelties, as the scholastic method had begun as an attempt to support the doctrines of the church and reconcile dogma with reason, but both had degenerated by the end of the Middle Ages into a method of employing logical subtleties in making hair-splitting theological distinctions. What had begun as an exercise ended in verbal duels with personal victory the aim rather than the achievement of truth. Intellectual acuteness of a kind may have been well taught, and a specialized verbal dexterity, but the real result was to make "a merit of being able to prove the most opposite things with equal facility" from the same set of premises, and to place a

¹⁸James Cragie Robertson (ed.), Materials for the History of Thomas Becket (London: Longman and Company, 1877), Vol. III, pp. 4 f.

premium on the ability of "disputing several successive days about nothing with the greatest dialectic skill."¹⁹ Thus it came about, in the words of von Hauner,

that dialectics, not merely in the philosophic faculty but in all faculties of all universities, ruled so overmasteringly that everywhere the interest in the essential import, the essential truth, and the essential cultivation of the scientific subjects that were taught, sunk out of sight, and men were completely satisfied with a mere formal dialectical truth.²⁰

When a student entered a medieval university a long course stretched before him. For four or five years he could expect to hear lectures on the logical and physical writings of Aristotle, covering, infinitely more thoroughly of course, the material that would be offered to a modern college upper-classman in a single semester course in the philosophy department. He would attend the disputations, take part in the student dialectical exercises, and perfect his knowledge of the universal academic language, Latin. When he was ready he took his first examination, which, if passed, made him a Baccalarius Artium. As a Bachelor he became an assistant teacher, helping Masters in the classrooms and in disputations, meanwhile attending lectures on Aristotle's advanced works in psychology, metaphysics, ethics and politics, and receiving an introduction to mathematics, astronomy and cosmology. After a minimum of two more years he was permitted to

¹⁹Williams, op. cit., p. 143.

²⁰Karl von Hauner, Geschichte der Pädagogik vom Wiederaufblühen klassischer Studien bis auf unsere Zeit (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1877), Vol. IV, p. 27.

submit to his second examination, the successful completion of which admitted him to the honor of Magister. All this work had been with the arts faculty, and now he was qualified to enter advanced work in one of the higher faculties: philosophy, theology, medicine or law. Another bachelor's degree was attained first after a year or so of study, and finally the student was admitted to candidacy for the doctorate. After fifteen to twenty years of travel, study and teaching, he might be admitted to the doctorate, highest academic honor of the medieval world. It is hardly necessary to comment that the mortality rate throughout the course was exceedingly high.

In view of the overarching domination of every aspect of medieval life by the church, and of the rather close, though sometimes unofficial, connection between the universities and the church, it is surprising to know how little "religious education" the medieval universities supplied. Even candidates for the priesthood were often taught little more than to construe their breviaries and to read the papal circulars in Latin, but the Bachelor of Arts was far too busy with Aristotle and logic to permit his curiosity to lead him far astray from the assigned avenues of knowledge; he was as little likely to have read the Bible as an undergraduate as to have investigated Justinian or Hippocrates. These subjects were reserved for study in the appropriate higher faculties. It is not greatly surprising that Martin Luther did not "discover" the Bible until after he had completed the master's

degree in the arts faculty. According to his own memory he was twenty years old when he happened upon a complete Bible for the first time in his life in the university library at Erfurt, but prior to this time Luther had never studied in a theological faculty and would have had no particular reason or opportunity to do outside reading in an unrelated field. Even the fully trained secular priest, who was not a theologian, was not expected to know anything of the Bible beyond that which was contained in his missal and breviary. The arid curriculum of dialectic and the strict intellectual discipline of the scholastic method completely dominated the labor of the student and the thought of every "educated" man; curiosity and investigation were not products of a medieval university education.²¹

3. The University of Erfurt

During the last week of April, 1501, "Martinus ludher de Mansfeld" matriculated with the dean of the arts faculty at the University of Erfurt.²² The newer university at Leipzig was much nearer to Mansfield, and many boys from the Harz region attended it, but Erfurt, so the Germans thought, was as famous as Paris in the academic world. It is possible that Martin's father decided in favor of Erfurt, for he was still

²¹Cf. Fashdall, op. cit., pp. 700 f., and Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 30 f.

²²Boehmer, op. cit., p. 22.

meeting most of the bills of his bright young son's education. If he had chosen Leipsig, Luther's whole life might have been different, for it almost seems that history conspired at Erfurt to change the mind of Martin Luther and the heart of all Germany.

At Erfurt school and town were closely knit together by a common past, and the origin of the university is an interesting story of the concern of medieval townsfolk for the progress of education. Graduation day became a customary city holiday, and city officials added the color of their robes to the academic caps and gowns of the faculty procession. Luther says that when he first saw a graduation procession he thought he had seen the highest pinnacle of earthly achievement.²³ Erfurt was an exciting and distinguished place when Luther went there: it was said to be the largest city of Germany, and a census of 1493 shows a population of nearly 17,000. The Archbishop of Mainz, Primate of Germany, was chancellor of the university, many of the teachers were monks, and there were several truly famous men on the faculty. By the end of the twelfth century the conventual schools of Erfurt for training priests had become rather famous, by mid-thirteenth century more than a thousand boys were studying there, and by the end of the century the schools of the four Collegiate Churches of the city had Magistri Scholarum on their faculties and were offering courses well beyond the

²³Thomas W. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 105 f.

curriculum of the standard grammar schools. These four schools were soon united in a loose organization under a Rector Superior, and he, at least, thought of the curriculum as a studium generale of university stature, for he titled himself in a document to Urban VI in 1362, "Rector superior studii generalis et solemnioris Alamanic artium Erfordensis," in spite of the absence of the higher faculties. Since most of its teachers seem to have come to Erfurt from Paris and other universities, it is doubtful whether the Erfurt school was qualified to grant degrees, but when Clement VII issued a Bull of Foundation in 1379, no important changes seem to have been made in the school as a result of the new charter. Five hundred and twenty-three persons matriculated at Erfurt in its first year as a recognized university, and the enrollment seems to have increased steadily until the opening of the new university at Leipzig cut into its student body. Erfurt reached its greatest importance during the middle years of the fifteenth century while Johannes Wesel taught there, and was given a new era of popularity shortly after Luther's student career by the circle of famous German humanists who became a part of its faculty. The University of Erfurt was closed by the Protestant German government in 1816.²⁴

²⁴Rashdall, op. cit., Vol. II, part I, pp. 242-47.

A. Johannes Wesel, Radical

"Joan Wesalia ruled the University of Erfurt by his books," wrote Martin Luther many years after he graduated, "and it was out of these that I studied for my master's degree."²⁵ Johannes Wesel, whose family name was Pischke or Michrath but who was usually called after the town where he was born, the little village of Ober-Wesel, and about whose early life very little more is known, began his studies at Erfurt about 1440.²⁶ The first definitely established date of his life is 1445, when he received his master's degree from the university. Shortly after his graduation he assumed the usual duties of a Magister in the teaching faculty, and in 1456 he was created doctor of divinity by the Erfurt faculty. Until 1460 he served as a highly distinguished professor in the university, but in that year he accepted a call to the city of Mayence as preacher. An outbreak of the dreaded plague soon drove him to Worms, where he remained as minister and public preacher for seventeen years, and then resigned only to spend the last two years of his life in prison for his radical preaching and writing.²⁷

Wesel's criticism of the church and its practices was

²⁵Martin Luther, Works (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman, 1915-1932), Vol. V, p. 230: On the Councils and the Churches, 1539.

²⁶G. Tillmann, Reformers before the Reformation (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1855), Vol. I, pp. 217, 229. Most of this volume is devoted to Wesel.

²⁷Ibid., p. 278.

initiated while he was a professor at Erfurt, and sharpened under the practical problems of his parish ministry at Worms. In 1450 Pope Nicholas V proclaimed the usual semicentennial Year of Jubilee, and sent the famed and learned Nicholas of Cusa into northern Europe to sell the benefits of the papal indulgence that usually accompanied such a celebration. Multitudes flocked to Rome during the year, and in the course of his tour of salesmanship Cardinal Cusa came to Erfurt, where the usual welcome was given to a man of such distinguished reputation and mission. The Cardinal was escorted by the clergy and citizens of Erfurt to the cathedral of Mary and Severus, and then to the monastery of St. Peter, where he preached on the lawn in front of the cloister. He was heard by great crowds, and it is reported that several citizens were trampled to death in their eagerness to avail themselves of the benefits offered by the distinguished visitor.²⁸ It was the practice of scholastic theology to justify the sale of such indulgences, and the custom had an honorable tradition: Alexander of Hales and Albertus Magnus had laid the foundation, and Thomas Aquinas had completed the structure. But one of the professors at the University of Erfurt, confronted with the booming business of Cardinal Cusa in town, departed from the usual tradition and published a tract not only about but against the policy of the church. "I myself have debated the value of Indulgence in the schools." he

²⁸Ullmann, op. cit., p. 231.

observed, "and maintained its efficacy and Divine authority, having as a scholar too easily assented to my teachers."²⁹ Sober as that he was, Vesel thoroughly restudied the entire matter, and came to the conclusion that the doctrine "does derive from Scripture"; in support of his conclusion Vesel produced seven propositions, each annotated and supported by Scripture: 1. God imposes a penalty on everyone who has infringed his law; 2. Christian priests are the ministers of God in the remission of guilt so incurred; 3. the penalty imposed by God, however, can be forgiven by no man; 4. the Scriptures nowhere state that any man can forgive this divine penalty; 5. the power of the Pope, himself, to remit penalty for sin is limited to positive law; 6. even the Pope's penalties do not necessarily correspond to God's; and 7. the opinion of the schoolmen concerning the supererogatory merits of the saints is pious, but false.

Following this line of reasoning with the rigor characteristic of a man well trained in medieval dialectic, Vesel found himself drawing certain radical conclusions:

Every sin is also a debt, but every debt is not a sin, nor every debtor a sinner. For the good and righteous man, and even God himself, is called a debtor without involving any reference to sin. Sin is the transgression of the divine law by thought, word or deed, and the sinner is consequently a transgressor. On the contrary, he who fulfills the divine law, is righteous, in virtue of a righteousness which is vouchsafed to him by God. To this I give the name Grace. It is what makes a man

²⁹Gyllmann, *op. cit.*, p. 259: *Joannis de Vesalia ad-versus Indulgentias Disputatio*, Ch. 1.

acceptable, and frees him from all that is contrary and displeasing to God.³⁰

Grace thus defined became for Wesel a fundamental teaching of scripture, and by the grace of God alone, he concluded, is man to be saved. This led him to an assertion of predestination, and Wesel was not one to flinch at the logical implication: from eternity God has inscribed all his elect in a book, and no act of man can suffice to change the entry.

He whom God hath pleased of his grace to save will be saved, even though all the priests in the world were to condemn and curse him; but he whom God condemns, will be condemned, though Pope and priest were unanimously to pronounce him saved.³¹

In relation to the Jubilee Indulgence, this could only mean that when the priest dispenses the sacrament of penitence to a person in a penitential frame of mind, God himself "works, produces and carries into effect the pardon of sin," without assistance or coercion from the Church of Rome.³²

In the parish ministry in Worms, surrounded by

³⁰Ullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 262; quoting from adversus Indulgentias, Ch. 11.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 294. This quotation is from a later work, Paradoxa, dating from the period of Wesel's ministry in Worms, and indicates a development rather than a change in his conclusions.

³²Ullmann points out striking similarities in wording between Wesel's work on indulgences and Luther's Ninety-five Theses, concerned with the same problem (pp. 275 ff.). It is possible to be too impressed by these similarities; the men had been trained in the same dialectical method, were writing upon the same subject, and could easily have used some of the same words with no sort of collaboration. The coincidence points up the tremendous influence of the pervading atmosphere in which Luther received his education.

uneducated priests and himself equipped with a brilliant and highly trained scholastic mind adept at discerning the errors in any logical system, Vesel enlarged his attack upon the church. "Rare as a black swan," he said, "is the priest who discharges the apostolic office with apostolical fidelity."³³ With a forthrightness that suggests an edge of bitterness, Vesel contrasted the actual state of religion in the church with that which might be expected of priests according to the Bible; priests were chiefly interested in their own advancement, though "they ought not to rejoice so much in being superior to others as in doing them good."

Behold, Christian brother, how the whole face of the primitive church of Christ has been changed! It is considered priestly merely to move the lips, and coldly and unintelligently to mumble the prayers. It is thought a glorious thing when the deacons in churches bray forth the Gospel and Epistles. They only are considered to have done their part well, and gain the loudest applause, who, when chanting lift their voices to the loudest pitch. None cares whether the psalm is likewise sung, with the spirit and the heart, so that one is disposed to believe, that theirs is no mistake who look upon human life as a mere comedy, and imagine that this is nowhere more manifest than in the church and among the clergy.³⁴

In his search for the truth in these matters, Vesel found the Scripture to be the only guarantee for unity of faith. "Seldom do I find that any two learned men agree in faith," he observed. "No one coincides in opinion with me, if we take

³³Gullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 289: De auctoritate, officio et potestate Pastorum ecclesiasticorum.

³⁴Ibid., p. 322: de auctoritate, p. 121.

away the Gospel; in it, however, we are all at one."³⁵ From his pulpit in Worms, Wesel preached an evangelical piety, "than which nothing is so greatly disrelished," with a fearlessness that soon became belligerent; he pled with his parishoners not to be frightened and discouraged by the papal curses and interdicts that might fall upon them, for "from bulls (made of paper and of lead) they dart but a harmless flash."³⁶

His condemnation of cherished practices of the church, at first the fruit of an intellectual dissent, became bold and harsh. "The consecrated oil is no better than that which is in daily use in your kitchens," he told the people of Worms. And on eating fish on Friday: "If St. Peter did introduce this practice, it could only have been to obtain a readier sale for his fish." His sophisticated disregard for the church hierarchy led him to say to people who did not possess his maturity of mind: "I despise the Pope, the Church and the Councils, and extol Christ. Let his word dwell in us richly."³⁷

Such preaching awakened a host of adversaries and no supporters among a people whose children and grandchildren fifty years later lifted Martin Luther to incredible heights of popularity for saying the same things. In February of 1479 Johannes Wesel was formally arraigned before a court of

³⁵Ullmann, op. cit., p. 294; from the Paradoxa (sermons), p. 291.

³⁶Loc. cit.

³⁷Ibid., p. 299; from the charges made against him at the trial called to establish his heresy.

inquisition in the archepiscopal city of Mayence and after a prolonged trial convicted of heresy. Wesel made a public recantation of his heretical views, and expected to be set at liberty, but when copies of his writings were burned he said, "O thou God of Mercy, must all the many good things I have written bear the punishment due to the little that was evil!" In order to keep Wesel himself perfectly harmless, he was sentenced to be imprisoned for life in the Augustinian monastery in Mayence, but he died in 1481, less than two years after his sentence began.³⁸

B. Conrad Mut, Humanist

When Martin Luther went to Erfurt, students were exposed to a provocative variety of influence. John of Wesel was far from forgotten, and his works were preserved and carefully studied, at least by graduate students. Hussite propagandists appeared at the university from time to time, quietly spreading their Christian socialism. Papal legates often visited the important center of German culture. Erfurt had been regarded as a leader in the field of literary humanism ever since the day Laders began to teach there in 1460,³⁹ Conrad Celtes had lectured there as early as 1485, and Rudolph Lange had been a teacher of renown. The chair of Poetry and

³⁸Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 329, 357.

³⁹Some scholars have attempted to trace a connection to the Thuringian Luder family from which Martin Luther descended. Ullmann discards this theory (p. 229, footnote).

eloquence had been officially established in 1409, and in 1501 Nicholas Marschalk began his first interpretations of the Greek authors. Scholasticism of course reigned supreme at Erfurt, but was the "moderate" type: in theology it deserted the dominant scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans for the more independent system of Duns Scotus and the Franciscans, and in philosophy it followed the new nominalism of William of Occam as distinguished from the ancient realism of Anselm and William of Champeaux. Occam's disciple Gabriel Biel, who died in 1495, was one of Erfurt's most celebrated professors, and the system of Biblical interpretation was that of one of the earliest Hebrew students of Germany, Nicholas de Lyra. Luther used Lyra's commentaries when he first taught theology at Wittenberg, and acknowledged the debt.⁴⁰ In the time of Luther's student career, the famed humanist "circle of 'Poets'" was already in formation. It was indeed an exciting place to go to school.

Conrad Mut⁴¹ was the permanent chief of the humanist circle of Erfurt. Mut was a learned man, the friend of the Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola, and is typical of the determinative influence that the Italian Renaissance had on some men in the north. When Mut Latinized his name into Mutianus and added Rufus because he was red-haired, he performed an act symptomatic of the easy way in which he severed

⁴⁰ Cf. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 190, and Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 84.

⁴¹ Mutdt, Mutta, Mutti, etc.

ties with his earnest German tradition. He had conceived a notion of combining Platonism with Christianity as the esoteric religion for thinkers and educated men like himself, while leaving the popular form of Christianity with its superstitions and seriousness for the common herd of men. He sought the companionship of men who made light of the traditions of the church and common morality, and gathered about him a circle of students and young professors.

Mut was born in 1472 in Hesse, and had attended the school of the Brethren at Deventer under Alexander Hegius before entering the University of Erfurt. After graduation he went to study law and assimilate the Renaissance in Italy, was made a doctor of laws at Bologna, found many friends among the Italian humanists and many patrons in the papal Curia at Rome. It was with the influence of these ecclesiastical friends rather than because of his qualifications for the office, that he was made a canon in the church at Gotha, the city near Erfurt in which he drew together his famed "circle." He was not a great author, but has left a collection of letters which gives a glimpse into the thought world of this typical German humanist.⁴²

It was an intellectual rebellion that stirred Mut's pen, not a spiritual revolt, and though he fired many shafts of wit at the theologians and poured scorn on the religion of his day, he had no thought either of leaving or reforming the

⁴²Lindsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 f. The letters have been collected by Krause (Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus [Cassel, 1855]).

church. His personal religion was a free and eclectic one. In private he denounced the fasts of the church, confession, and masses for the dead, and called the begging friars "cowled monsters." He scorned the popular religion of the people and loved to say startling things: "I do not revere the coat or the beard of Christ; I revere the true and living God, who has neither beard nor coat."⁴³ "The true Christ is not a man," he began, "but spirit and soul, which do not manifest themselves in outward appearance and are not to be touched or seized with the hands."⁴⁴ Christianity had its beginnings long before the advent of Jesus, and the true Christ was "equally imparted to the Jews, the Greeks and the Germans."⁴⁵ The law of God is a natural law, he maintained, and was not given to Moses, or the Romans or the Greeks, but is written in the hearts of men. He refused to believe in miracles, and thought that the Scriptures were full of fables such like those of Aesop; there is but one God, though called by many names, "Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpine, Tellus, Mary ... When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ."⁴⁶ At the same moment he heaps withering sarcasm upon the Christianity of his time and reveals a completely unwinking realism and totally unmoral appraisal of his own

⁴³Lindsay, op. cit., p. 65; citing Krause, p. 427.

⁴⁴Loc. cit.; citing Krause, p. 94.

⁴⁵Loc. cit.; citing Krause, p. 32.

⁴⁶Loc. cit.; citing Krause, p. 28.

digalty as an official of the church:

We mean by faith not the conformity of what we say with fact, but an opinion about divine things founded on credulity and a persuasion which seeks after profit. Such is its power that it is commonly believed that to us were given the keys of heaven. Whoever, therefore, despises our keys shall feel our nails and our clubs. We have taken from the breast of Serapis a magical stamp to which Jesus of Galilee has given authority. With that figure we put our fees to flight, we cozen money, we consecrate God, we shake hell, we work miracles; whether we be heavenly minded or earthly minded makes no matter, provided we sit happily at the banquet of Jupiter.⁴⁷

C. Martin Luther, Student

Martin Luther entered the University of Erfurt as a product of a better than average preparatory education, he plunged immediately into the scholastic curriculum leading to the bachelor of arts degree. His course would have normally begun with a review of Latin grammar, and advanced practice with the literary forms; for his beginning textbook he would have used the Doctrinale of Alexander, which was familiar from his high school days. His first lecture course was probably an introduction to logic taught by Petrus Hispanus; the text was the Analytics of Aristotle. In the second and third semesters the concentration on logic began, with Aristotle furnishing the intricate laws of demonstration and proof, and Porphyry's medieval Isagoge, the illustrations and commentary. Disputational exercises were added to the load of book work, and in the final semester an introduction

⁴⁷Lindsey, op. cit., p. 66; citing Krause, p. 79.

to the Physics of Aristotle, and a lecture series on spherical astronomy. In addition to this concentration on formal logic, the candidate heard lectures in moral philosophy, based chiefly on the Nicomachean Ethics, Apologetics and Household Economy, all by Aristotle. At the end of his course the bachelor was expected to have achieved mastery of a rigorously logical system of knowledge, based largely on Aristotle as interpreted by the medieval schoolmen.

In the minimum time permitted, Martin Luther satisfied all of the lecture requirements, passed his bachelor's examination, and was graduated on St. Michael's Day, 1502.⁴⁸ Immediately he entered the course leading to the master's examination in philosophy. That fall he began to attend lectures on the Aristotelian works on natural philosophy, metaphysics and moral philosophy. In addition he was required to press on into Euclidian geometry, planetary astronomy and the problems of mathematical perspective. Sometime during the course he heard a month of lectures on music. Throughout the two years there was constant practice in the vital scholastic art of disputation, for he must learn to fence and parry with a Latin foil within the rules prescribed by Aristotle. When the minimum time for the course had expired, Luther took the master's examinations, and on January 7, 1503, was graduated master of arts, standing second in a class of seventeen.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Boehmer, op. cit., p. 23; Lindsay, op. cit., p. 197, etc.

⁴⁹Boehmer, op. cit., p. 24; Lindsay, op. cit., p. 197, etc.

Hans Luder was so proud that he sent his son an extravagant present, a copy of the Corpus Juris, and Martin transferred to the Law Faculty to begin the specialization required of a professional lawyer.

But few personal glimpses are given of Luther as a student. His classmates called him "the Philosopher," "the Musician," and spoke of his lute playing, his singing, and his ready power of debate. He seems to have been a serious, well-liked young man, and a good student. Melancthon says that the training Luther received at Erfurt stunted his moral and religious development, and later Luther himself belittled the benefit he received from the instruction there, but apparently he had little quarrel with the teachers or their pedagogical methods. He never ceased to respect Jodocus Truttvetter of Eisenach and Bartholomew Arnold of Unsingen, who were his teachers; the general practice of dictation and the exclusive use of Latin were his own techniques as a professor at Wittenberg, and in 1532 he urged the return to disputations against some dissent; the scholastic techniques of logic appears in all of his writings up to 1521, including the three great Reformation treatises and the Ninety-five Theses.

It was the content of the course that Luther later attacked so vigorously: the so-called "modernist" interpretation of Aristotle made by William of Occam. The period of high emotion in the conflict between the via antiqua of Anselm and the via moderna of Occam had passed long before Luther went to university. In most of the German universities of the

period the two schools were taught simultaneously,⁵⁰ but Luther's teachers were Occamists and taught him their point of view alone. Thomas Aquinas and his followers had raised a vast and intricate system based upon the assumption that in dealing with eternal and universal realities, and even with those outside the grasp of human senses, human reason was a reliable source of knowledge. God, they said, was the subject of rational knowledge exactly as any sensible object - a stone, a tree, a falling object: theology was a science as astronomy was a science. Upon this assumption the Thomists had built the via antiqua. But the Occamists flatly denied that human reason can attain knowledge of anything that lies outside the reach of its senses: trees and falling objects may be known, but the proportion of angels' feet to the head of a pin, and the nature of God, these were subjects of faith. In the realm of faith, they declared, it is necessary implicitly to accept and obediently to believe, no matter how absurd or contradictory the evidence might appear to be. The Thomists had held that it was the human idea, not the object, that possessed reality; the Occamists insisted that reality was in the object, and that human consciousness simply "mirrored" the object in certain ideas entertained about it. The transfer of the sensual object into the intellectual idea, according to the Occamists, was accomplished by the action of the will;

⁵⁰Rife. op. cit., p. 63, cites Friedrich Benary (Via Moderna und Via Antiqua, p. 57), who has tried to show that the same peace existed at Erfurt, which has always been considered to have been a stronghold of the modernists.

knowledge is thus made to rest upon an experience. It is clear enough that man cannot experience God, for he is not a sensual object; therefore there can be no knowledge of him. Knowledge, said the modernists, is cognition of the natural world, and faith is cognition of the supernatural world. Theology ceases to be a science, and there can be no demonstration, even in human logic, of the realities of faith; these supernatural realities are understandable only by inspired knowledge imparted by the Holy Ghost and maintained authoritatively by the church.

In 1520 Martin Luther said, "I am of Occam's party,"⁵¹ and though sometimes he stormed bitterly against some of the characteristic doctrines of the Occamist position, he never lost the stamp of the modernist system, placed deeply in his reason and imagination by his instructors at Erfurt. Martin Luther never gave up the conviction that reason is incapable of discerning the mysteries of faith. This principle became of historic significance in the Reformation; Luther also consistently applied it to other spheres, insisting that storms are generally caused by natural forces, that alchemy is a questionable science, and that there is nothing in astronomy to consider seriously. The two areas, reason and faith, were always clearly separated in his mind; they were nontangent spheres, and the standards of one applied in no way to the other. Later Luther picked out the weakest point in the

⁵¹Martin Luther, *Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus, 1885-1939), Vol. IV, p. 600: "Sum enim Occamicæ factionis."

Occamist position and attacked it devastatingly, for Occam had raised the potentialities of the human will to illogical heights and had made the will the determinant factor in salvation, but the general assumptions and principles of the system he learned at Erfurt always remained with him.

The Occamists at Erfurt also turned Luther against Aristotle as a trustworthy spiritual guide. Aristotle relied wholly on reason, which, because of the superior quality of Aristotelian logic, rendered reliable his observations on physics and analytics, but the Stagirite could have known nothing of the Ultimate Cause, of supernatural purposes, or of eternal life, and therefore any such synthesis as Thomas Aquinas had attempted between the Greek and Christianity was utterly futile and neighbored on blasphemy. As early as 1509 he denounced Aristotle's view of the future life as false,⁵² and as the Reformation was beginning he said that the Ethics suited theology "like the wolf the lamb."⁵³ He repeatedly terms him "the pagan philosopher," but always implicitly accepted his "exact method" in logic,⁵⁴ and once urged that Aristotle's logic, rhetoric and poetics be retained in the schools.⁵⁵ Always Luther's knowledge of the natural sciences was wholly dependent upon the Philosopher.⁵⁶

⁵²Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. IX, p. 26.

⁵³Letter to Spalatin, September 2, 1518.

⁵⁴Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), Vol. II, #2414 (1532), #3608d (1537).

⁵⁵"To the Christian Nobility," 1520.

⁵⁶Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), Vol. II, #2159 (1531). I am indebted to Life (op. cit., pp. 70 f.), who has called attention to these citations.

While Luther was at Erfurt the curriculum of scholastic philosophy left little time for the classics, and though he apparently found opportunity to read some Virgil, Ovid, Plautus, and perhaps Horace and Juvenal, he never attended the humanist lectures and never became a member of the humanist circle.⁵⁷

During this long and rather intense period of study the life of the student at Erfurt was carefully supervised; it appears that the excesses of other generations of students had prompted an honest effort at Erfurt to regulate the activities of its student body, though Luther later referred to the university as "a bawdy house and a beer house."⁵⁸ Every student joined a bursa, or fraternity, and unless he could get into one of the houses he was not admitted to classes. Martin Luther chose the bursa of St. George at Lehmann's Bridge, apparently without any particular forethought or plan. It turned out to be a hospice with strict regulations: he could not study when he wanted, he could not go to bed or get up on his own initiative. He was constantly under the supervision of the master of the bursa. A master of arts watched over the career of each beginning student, and the rector of the

⁵⁷Lindsay, op. cit., p. 197: "He found time, however, to read a good many Latin authors privately, and also to learn something of Greek. Virgil and Plautus were his favorite authors; Cicero also charmed him; he read Livy, Terence and Horace. He seems also to have read a volume of selections from Propertius, Persius, Lucretius, Tibullus, Silvas Italicus, Statius and Claudian."

⁵⁸Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), Vol. II, #2719b.

university made regular tours of inspection of the bursae. No student was admitted to final examinations without a warrant to the respectability of his character from the master of the bursa where he lived. In the university the course was strictly prescribed, and at the House there were regular review sessions and meetings for disputation.

St. George's bursa followed a monastic model in its administration. Prayers were said at the beginning and ending of every day; students were required to pray through the Psalter regularly, and at mealtime the Bible was read and interpreted. It was even a requirement that a student holding a stipend must thank God once a week that he had been born a man and not a woman.⁵⁹ Luther could not even dress as he pleased: he had to wear the uniform of the House, a tunic of distinctly clerical cut.

In February of 1505 Martin received the brown master's cap and mounted the lecture platform to give the customary address before the university. Hans Luder was tremendously impressed with the achievement of his son, and dropped the German familiar form of address, du, to speak to Martin respectfully as Ihr. For two years, according to custom, the master of arts was expected to lecture to the beginning bachelor candidates in the Arts Faculty, and it was assumed that during this period he would continue some sort of study.

⁵⁹Rife, op. cit., p. 56, footnote.

CHAPTER VI

MAN OF THE HOUR

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There was no real medical faculty at Erfurt to keep a young master, and theology was impossible, for Father Hans was already contemplating a bride for his most successful child. The faculty of law was the only avenue open.

The lectures that the young graduate was expected to deliver were to begin on April 23rd; the proposed course in the Law Faculty did not open until the 20th of May; for the first time in his life Martin Luther found himself with four weeks and no special duties with which to fill them. It was only natural that he would spend at least some of this time reviewing the long road over which he had come from the grammar school in Mansfield. He was a man of twenty-two years, and though he had always been surrounded by potent religious influences he had never taken time to think much about himself and his own salvation. The mood of retrospection and introspection deepened about him. He began to "wander about sadly." He reviewed the course of his education, as a scholar will do, in search of spiritual assurance. He even grew homesick. He began his lectures in April, and started attending courses in law in May, but in June he asked for a leave of absence and went home to visit his family and friends. About June 30th he set out for Erfurt again.⁶⁰ On July 2nd, only a few hours from Erfurt, a sudden storm cloud swept overhead, a flash of lightning struck in front of him, and he was thrown to the ground by the concussion. Overcome

⁶⁰Boehmer, op. cit., p. 33.

by years of study and the quiet religious surroundings of home and school, by his own perplexities and the panic of the moment, he called for the aid of St. Anna of the Miners.

"Help," he cried, "and I will become a monk."

CHAPTER IV

THE OLD WAY OF SALVATION

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CHAPTER IV
THE OLD WAY OF SALVATION

1. Luther's Decision to Become a Monk

Hans Luder flew into a towering rage when he heard that his most promising son had turned his back on a distinguished career in law and an honorable marriage to lose himself in the mysterious recesses of a monastery. The letter he wrote cutting Martin off from "all paternal grace and favor" dropped, in insulting fashion, the respectful forms of address he had used in speaking to his son as Magister Artium. Hans was profoundly disappointed, and the sense of frustration he felt in the face of the finality of the vow which had been made before he knew of its imminence convinced him that his son had deliberately betrayed him. Hans changed his attitude reluctantly: the dreaded plague struck suddenly and two younger sons died. Hans felt duty bound to offer something holy to God - his son Martin. At last, after Martin Luther had been in the monastery for several months, another letter arrived from Hans adding a father's blessing to the sacred undertaking.

But if Martin Luther's decision to become a monk cut him off from his family, it was not also a break with the rest

of his past. Luther's life is a pattern of vibrant action based on decisions that have been reached after long and tenacious struggles. The decision to enter the monastery, and the brief, blinding burst of ascetism which followed, was the first occurrence of this theme; the next tracing of the pattern was begun in the long intellectual struggle with the orthodox doctrine of salvation as monk and professor which erupted in the Reformation.

The entry into the monastery has appeared abrupt and sudden to many, and a great deal of legend has risen to explain the event. Hieronymus Pontz of Windesheim, a close classmate of Martin, is said to have died suddenly of pleurisy shortly before they were to stand together for the Magister's examination. A few weeks after Luther had taken the degree another student friend died of plague. Plague broke out again in Erfurt only a few days before Luther donned the habit of a monastery novitiate.¹ Sudden death and bolts of lightning may have played their part in the decision, but the mystic piety of his home, the pervading influence of the school at Magdeburg and the memory of the begging prince of Anhalt, the quiet religion of the Cottas and the Schalbes in Eisenach, the age-old philosophical problems wrestled with at Erfurt, and the semimonastic regulations of his bursa at St. George's - these were the schools in which Luther's spirit had been educated for the monastery. Luther had literally been in school all

¹Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), Vol. I, p. 197, footnote.

his life. He was a highly educated man, but the educational training had left unanswered the questions that perplexed his heart. He had achieved all in the intellectual sphere that ought to have made a man happy, and it was time now for his religious training to demand enlargement. "Doubt makes a monk," went the popular saying, and Luther knew that in his case it was true.

When Luther reached Erfurt unhurt but still shaken by the experience in the forest, he first consulted his friends about the impending change in his life. Several days later he secured a release from the university, sold all his books except Virgil and Plautus, and with the profit from the sale entertained his friends at a farewell supper in his "master's quarters." Early the next morning, possibly before the party had broken up, his friends escorted him through the Kompturhasse to the gate of the Black Cloister of the Augustinian Friars not far away. "Today you see me," he said as he entered, "and henceforth nevermore."²

2. The Augustinian Canons

Martin Luther's choice of the Black Cloister was dictated by far more than the fact of its nearness to Lehmann's Bridge, and that he had seen its buildings every day of his

²Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 34.

student residence at Erfurt. There were seven other monasteries in the city: the Benedictine abbey stood on Peter's Hill, the Carthusian house in the southern part of the city, the convent of the Dominicans was on one side of the little river that divided the town and the Franciscan on the other, the little cloister of the Servites, or "Servants of the Holy Virgin," stood at the Krampfer Gate. Of all these the Black Cloister enjoyed the greatest prestige in Erfurt, for it was noted for its preaching, its intelligent ascetism, and for its prior, von Staupitz. Moreover the Augustinian Eremites was probably the most respected of the monastic orders by the common people of Germany.

The name and work of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo while the Roman Empire was in the process of falling, had been normative to the monastic movement in Europe throughout the Middle Ages. It was he who, through one of those perplexing contradictions in which he excels, prevented monasticism from becoming a movement outside of and often enough in competition with the church as it was in the East. The split between church and monastery in the Eastern Empire during the medieval period was precisely the logical fruition of the monastic ideal; it was Augustine who prevented such a division in the West. Augustine's most influential and widely known writing, the City of God, had shown that a single Christianity possesses a double form: it is the authoritative, visible kingdom, the City of God whose foundations are not in this present time, the Church Catholic; it is also the inner kingdom of

contemplation, the free world of the spirit best nursed in ascetism and the monastery.³

Furthermore, Augustine clearly demonstrated that his position was tenable; he remained a bishop of the church and at the same time an active member of his own monastic organization. When Augustine returned to his native Africa from Italy in 388 A.D., he established a community of religious men at Tagaste, and when he was ordained priest and put in charge of a church, he made the clergymen of his cathedral live together according to a set rule. As bishop at Hippo he extended the custom into several churches.⁴ Augustine's practice was an important part of a larger movement to which his writings gave philosophical justification and ecclesiastical approval. Eusebius of Vercellae had begun such a rule several years before Augustine's first venture at Tagaste, and the efforts of them both were part of a larger movement to separate the clergy from the laymen of the community by providing a different costume, different style of trimming the hair, different private life, and different civil status. The ascetism of celibacy was already an accepted part of the regimen, and Augustine himself, as priest and bishop, would not see any woman except in the presence of a third party.⁵ However,

³Adolph Harnack, The History of Dogma (Boston: Roberts, 1897; Little, Brown, 1898-99), Vol. V, pp. 77 f., 137, 138, 152, 219.

⁴Herbert B. Workman, The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal (London: Charles M. Kelley, 1913), pp. 253 f.

⁵Ibid., p. 59.

Augustine's rules were simple, mild and flexible.

Monasticism spread slowly at first, but then during the deep Middle Ages, with a great rush that passed far beyond the moderate limits set up by Augustine. In Gaul and Spain it did not become the custom for the clergymen in a town to live together for discipline, economy and education until the sixth century. By the seventh century great disorders had already arisen in these houses, and at the close of the eighth century Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, headed a strong movement to correct the life of the "canons" and bring them back to the simple purity of Augustine's rules. The reform was but short-lived, however, and a strong reform party headed by Hildebrand introduced a strict rule for monasteries in the Lateran Council of 1059. The new, reformed rule was taken in part from the writings of Augustine and in part from writings then believed to have been by him but now known to be false. This so-called Rule of St. Augustine was based on a letter written by the Bishop to a nunnery in Hippo giving directions for the conduct of the House, and on a sermon in which he described the life he enjoyed with his fellow priests at Hippo.⁶ Three Rules were drawn up from these sources: the first two were apparently lost very early, and the third rule of forty-five sections was preserved by the Middle Ages as the "Austin Rule." The Austin Rule was drawn up for priests, and therefore

⁶Augustine, Epistle 211, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886), First Series, Vol. I, pp. 563-68. The sermon, Sermon 355, is not in the PNF series.

the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, or "Austin Canons" as they were popularly called, differed from the monks, who had no desire to attain full ordination but preferred to remain more independent of the church.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Austin Rule is its flexibility. It was comprised of a simple set of instructions confined to fundamental principles; adherents were required to renounce private property, live in a common house, and be ordained priests. Almost invariably the Canons found themselves rendering great practical service, an activity which alone marked them off from the more ascetic monks. They served churches, conducted schools, established and staffed hospitals; later the Knights Templar and some other military orders came under the Austin Rule. There was ample opportunity for those who preferred active service. Many went out as missionaries; in all their activities they remained the handmaid of the church.⁷

At first their organization was so free that it was not until 1339 that Benedict XI established a system of provincial chapters and over-all organization. The elasticity of the Rule appealed to many people of superior intellectual and spiritual abilities, and the Austin Canons became one of the great influential factors in the religious life of the Middle Ages. St. Victor, famous for its teachers Hugh⁸ and Richard,⁹

⁷Dana Carlton Munro, The Middle Ages (New York: The Century, 1924), p. 325.

⁸Died 1141.

⁹Died 1173.

was founded by the renowned teacher William of Champeaux, about 1100, and set under the Augustinian plan. Gerard Groote came directly under their influence, and the rule he set up for his Brethren of the Common Life at Windesheim was administered under an adaptation of the Austin Rule.¹⁰ Mount St. Agnes, where Thomas à Kempis dwelt in "the silent, motionless center of a whirling and incomprehensible world," was an Austin-ruled house. In England a house of women was founded in 1131 which became known as the Gilbertines. The Praemontre-tensians, or White Canons, were established in 1120 by Norbert at Premontre in a lonely valley near Laon in France, and became the direct forebears of the Franciscan orders.¹¹

The Augustinian Hermies did not share in the common ridicule heaped upon the begging monks by the people of Germany. It was to their house, the Black Cloister, in Erfurt, that Martin Luther came in search of peace. It was the most distinguished representative of the contemplative life in Erfurt.

3. Luther in the Monastery

A. As Novitiate

On July 17, 1505, Martin Luther applied for admission to the Black Cloister, and was assigned to the monastery hostelry for observation and self-examination. After about two

¹⁰See ante, p. 77 (Chapter II, footnote 80).

¹¹Gorkman, op. cit., pp. 254-55.

months of probation he was given the typical tonsure of the order, issued his novitiate's garments, and greeted with the kiss of peace. Following the ceremonies of welcome, he was plunged immediately into more than a year of training. First he committed to memory the Rule of St. Augustine, and a large portion of the constitution that had been given to the House by Staupitz only the year before. In addition there was a multitude of strict rules to learn and to keep: he had to learn how, when, where and before whom to kneel, and when to fall to the ground; he learned to walk with a slightly bowed head, never to speak in the choir, refectory or cell between eight in the evening and six in the morning. He learned the intricate sign language by which silence was circumvented during those long hours. He learned never to laugh or smile, to clean and scrub his own cell and help in the kitchen with the daily work. He learned the intricate ritual of medieval worship, and participated in it daily. He made private confession at least once a week, and public confession of offenses against the rules of the order was required before a full meeting of the chapter. A Master of Novices was assigned to look after the progress of his soul, and Luther later remembered this spiritual taskmaster as an excellent man, "undoubtedly under the damned cowl a true Christian."¹² It was a severe existence, and Luther plunged into its austerities with all

¹²Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928, p. 35; citing a letter to the Elector of Saxony, April 9, 1532.

the enthusiasm born of an intense hope that self-mortification would bring religious satisfaction. Later he ascribed his ill health to the hardships of life in the cloister,¹³ and attacked the asceticisms of monastic life with bitter fire. If any ascetic could have earned salvation from the rigors of cloister life, it certainly would have been Martin Luther.¹⁴ But with all the rigor, Luther knew that he had joined a select group of men in the world whose profession was not merely knowledge and intellectual brilliance, but the service of God. At his first mass he said to his father that his life in the cloister was such "a fine, quiet and divine life" that at times he felt as if he were "among the angels."¹⁵

B. As Student of Theology

One of the most significant characteristics of the degeneration of monasticism during the later Middle Ages was its loss of even its meager first interest in educational training; monasticism as a whole remained aloof from the rest of the world, and educational usefulness for anyone except its own new members was no part of the concern of the monasteries.¹⁶ The Augustinian cloister in Erfurt, however, was a liberally endowed organization, and one of its purposes was

¹³Martin Luther, Werke (Weimar: Hermann Bohlhaus, 1885-1939), Vol. XLV, p. 670.

¹⁴Ibid., Vol. XXXVIII, p. 143.

¹⁵Fife, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁶Cf. Workman, op. cit., p. 247.

the provision of advanced theological training for its most promising members, in addition to the standard professional training required of all novitiates who were, in time, all to be ordained to the priesthood. Like the priesthood, advanced study was not a matter of individual preference, but was commanded by the general vicar of the order. From the time he entered the Cloister, Martin Luther was a man marked for advanced training: he was already a scholar of brilliance and had lectured at the university for several weeks, and in addition he was marked by the miraculous conversion he had received and the fervor with which he went about his religious discipline.

A studium generale had been maintained for over a century at the Erfurt Cloister of the Augustinian order, and like the training given at the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries in Erfurt, the curriculum was closely associated with the university. Several of the leading instructors in the Theological Faculty at the university were Augustinians, and in many ways the training Luther now entered upon was a continuation of that which he had taken as a candidate for the master's degree, except that now he was in training for the priesthood and possessed a sort of scholarship with the Black Cloister, where he carried on the regular cloister duties. At the command of the prior, therefore, he soon began to attend lectures on Peter Lombard's Sentences, the great theological text of the Middle Ages, and studied Gabriel Biel's commentary upon them. Biel had been a professor at Tübingen and approached

the Sentences with the same Occamist assumptions that Luther had learned as a philosophy major in his undergraduate days. In addition to theology, the course required at least one exegetical course on an Old Testament book, and one on a book from the New.¹⁷

The important lectures on the Sentences were given by John Mathin, unknown beyond the university, but an able and strict instructor. Mathin had studied under Gabriel Biel, was a thoroughgoing follower of Peter d'Ailly and William of

¹⁷Rife, op. cit., p. 123. The Sententiarum libri quattuor of Peter Lombard, the famous Magister sententiarum as he was called, was one of the most successful textbooks of all time. The Sentences are comprised of four books: the Trinity, in which is discussed also the knowledge of God, divine providence and predestination; the Creation, including both angels and men, the fall, grace, and free will; the Incarnation, embracing the person and work of Christ, and followed by a discussion of faith, hope, love, virtue and vice; and the Sacraments, concluding with a discussion of eschatology. Peter was born in Lombardy, and in Paris was successively student, teacher and bishop. He was a wide scholar of the Catholic tradition: the fourfold division of the Sentences was apparently suggested by John of Damascus whose Exposition of the Orthodox Faith had recently been translated into Latin; in other respects he follows Abelard and Hugo of St. Victor and reproduces the teaching of the western rather than the eastern church; the Latin fathers are quoted copiously, and there are over a thousand citations from Augustine alone. As in Abelard's Sic et non, authorities are quoted extensively both for and against the propositions under discussion, but Lombard calls medieval dialectical logic into play in the explanation of inconsistencies and difficulties that Abelard had permitted to stand without comment. The Sentences was not a systematic theology, but a summary of the Catholic faith of the day which proved to be extremely convenient. It contained nothing new, but soon became and for centuries continued to be the great theological handbook of the west. (Cf. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, History of Christian Thought [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946], Vol. II, pp. 249-52.)

Occam, and made his students read and reread their works until they committed long passages to memory and became thoroughly conversant with the "modernist" position. Nathin died a strong opponent of the Reformation in 1529, and is reported to have said to Luther at some time during the course: "Brother Martin, let the Bible alone; read the old teachers; they give you the whole marrow of the Bible, and reading the Bible merely breeds unrest."¹⁸ Apparently Luther had begun to read the Bible for himself, and had raised questions as disturbing to Nathin as to himself. Thus Occam, in whose system was to be found devastating criticism of the older scholasticism, continued to be Luther's instructor. He also learned the thoughts of d'Ailly, a broadminded churchman who favored the authority of the councils. Biel, too, was a Modernist, and the new course in theology did not require Luther to unlearn the philosophical position he had learned in the arts faculty. The only member of the theology staff who represented a different position was John Genser of Palz, who was famous for his writings in favor of papal absolutism, papal indulgences, and the doctrine of attrition. But Gensler was old and frail, and while he lived at the Black Cloister, he was probably never Luther's teacher. Thus it was that his new studies led him but farther along the same familiar road.

The influence of William of Occam and the Modernists echoes through Luther's total thought pattern. Occam furnished

¹⁸Lindsay, op. cit., p. 199.

a basic foundation, parts of which Luther built upon and parts of which he rejected. It was from Occam that Luther derived his deep-seated distrust of human reason in the area of theology, and the emphasis on faith, which as faith in the Word of God was the unique source of Christian Truth, became the battle cry of the Reformation. It was from Occam's determined cleavage between theology and the natural sciences that Luther learned his dislike of Aristotle; in 1520 he demanded that the "blind heathen" be ejected from the universities. On the same ground he rejected decisively the humanist dream of combining Greek philosophy with Christian theology in a sort of super-religion. From Occam Luther learned his antagonism for the hair-splitting techniques of the scholastic method, and the appeal to Scripture in matters of faith.¹⁹

In one significant area, however, Luther found Occam's position so unsatisfactory that he was driven to a criticism of it so prolonged in its intensity and incisive in its conclusion that the religious faith of the world was changed as a result of his own conclusion. The issue began with the Occamist conception of the will and ended in Justification by Faith.

In his theory of cognition Occam had given the place of final importance to the will: reality, he had argued, exists only in actual objects, the sensual impressions of which are rendered real to the human consciousness by the unique action of the human will. When transferred to the field of

¹⁹James Mackinnon, *The Origins of the Reformation* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939), pp. 348 f.

theology, this estimate of the significance of the will assumed tremendous importance, and represented an attempt to rescue human dignity from the pit of corruption into which Augustine had plunged it a millenium before. In opposition to an English monk named Pelagius, who startled the world of his day by denying original sin and asserting the capacity of the will to choose and attain perfect goodness, Augustine thundered the total corruption of human nature and its absolute helplessness as a result of the fall of Adam, and rejected completely the freedom of the will to choose good by its own ability. The power to determine good belongs solely to God, insisted Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius, who, Himself, determines whether or not man can do good. Salvation, therefore, belongs to God, and man of himself can do nothing more than to accept in faith the will or grace of God.

Though Augustine's theory of the manner of salvation was accepted as normative by scholastic medieval theology, there had always been an undercurrent of divergence. It seemed to many thinkers, especially under the humanistic influence of the Italian Renaissance, that Augustine's doctrine of total corruption and complete impotence seemed to minimize man's responsibility for ethical achievement, and that absolute predestination unnecessarily sacrificed the powers and achievements of human reason. This incipient dissatisfaction became resurgent criticism with Duns Scotus, William of Occam and his followers d'Ailly and Biel, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The significance of the human will in their

natural philosophy became an assertion in theology of the freedom of the will. Man, they said, obviously does as he wills; that is clear from his everyday choices. Likewise, he can of his own volition turn from sin to God, and when he does so he creates merit which contributes to his salvation. Gabriel Biel wrote:

Although Christ's suffering is the principal merit on account of which grace is conferred, it is, nevertheless, not the sole and total meritorious cause [of man's salvation]. For it is manifest that there always concurs with the merit of Christ a certain operation of merit in the recipient of grace.²⁰

Man is not totally corrupt and displeasing to God of himself, these theologians argued, and by exerting himself with all the powers that are in him, he may "entice God" to give him the grace of salvation. However, in order to explain the possibility that some men of good works might not be saved, the Occamists pointed out that salvation ultimately depends upon the acceptance of the individual by God, whose will remained sovereign and arbitrary.

The logical system was approximately airtight, but the practical implications of the system for a man of deep religious consciousness were profoundly unwholesome. Man must exert himself to the utmost in order to multiply the merit of his good works and seek God's recognition, but he could never know the state of his soul, he must ever remain completely at the mercy of an authoritarian and arbitrary God. Even though

²⁰ Mackinnon. op. cit., p. 350.

he had done all he could, a man might nevertheless fail of acceptance by God. Martin Luther was a man of religious sensitiveness, and the harder he drove himself to ascetisms and self-denials, and the closer he came to disintegration, the more he was filled with anguish. "When I get to thinking of this," he wrote, "I forget all that God and Christ are and come to the point where God is a villain, ... where the laudate ceases and the blaspheme begins."²¹ Yet this is a practical difficulty, and as late as 1516 Luther is lecturing to his classes on the basis of Occam's theory that man prepares himself for saving grace by voluntary actions of his own.

Thus Luther's mind was tormented by the combination of rigorous religious exercise and strict intellectual discipline to which he was being subjected. In a very real way he had leaped on the horse provided by the monastery in his hour of need only to find himself riding off in two different directions. He was tormented by his apparent inability to attain that simple righteousness which would unite him with the Being in whom was his salvation, and he threw himself with violence into the approved spiritual discipline. He fasted, he scourged himself, he ate but twice a day, he spent long hours in the chapel. He became anxious to confess every sin he had ever committed, and wearied his confessors with imagined vices until they finally ordered him to cease confessing until he had found something worth confessing. His personal

²¹Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. II, p. 688. Cf. also Vol. V, pp. 620 ff. and Fife, op. cit., pp. 123-30.

supervisor gave him books to read: the Vitae Patrum, legends of the Fathers, the Collations of Cassias of Marselleis, and the Dialogues of Virgilius against certain ancient heresies. They discussed John Huss together, "executed without instruction, evidence, and without confutation."²²

John von Staupitz, who was the vicar-general of the provincial order, noticed the anxious young man on his visits to the Erfurt monastery and tried to help him in his difficulties. Staupitz revoked the order against reading scriptures, and gave Luther a Glossa Ordinaria where passages were explained in the allegorical method with quotations from various church fathers. Staupitz urged Luther to make collections of parallel passages for himself, and patiently explained to him that he did not think of God and man in permanent opposition to each other, but that righteousness before God might be found in personal faith in Jesus Christ.²³ The first peace came to the struggling novitiate while he was reading Romans in his cell. It is not just clear when the moment of enlightenment came, or what immediate effect it had upon Luther beyond the temporary release of his emotional tensions. He continued with his theological studies, and especially in Bernard's mystical sermons on the Songs of Solomon he found more guidance in his problem of achieving direct relationship with God.

²²Boehmer, op. cit., p. 41.

²³Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 202 f.

Meanwhile the regular order of advancement toward the priesthood continued. Luther took his formal vows of admission to the Order in September of 1506, and swore himself to obedience, poverty and chastity. On December 19th he was consecrated subdeacon, on February 27, 1507 he was ordained deacon, and was ordained priest on April 4.²⁴ There is probably no truth in the legend that when Father Luther conducted his first mass on May 2nd, he turned his back upon the altar just as he was about to elevate the Host for the moment of miracle in which the bread becomes the actual flesh of Christ, and was only held from running away by the master of novices. It was a gala occasion, and the new priest's first mass was celebrated by visitors and a feast at the Cloister refectory. Hans Luder and others on twenty horses came all the way from Mansfield for the occasion, and Martin's father contributed a small fortune of twenty gulden to the kitchen for the feast after the service.

It was there at the familiar table, surrounded with old friends and his brethren of the Cloister, that Luther retold the story of his experience in the thunderstorm near Erfurt. "But what," interrupted his father, "if it were only a ghost?"²⁵

* * * * *

Even as a fully ordained priest and member of the Order, Luther's studies went on. Staupitz kept a watchful

²⁴Cf. Boehmer, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁵Ibid., p. 43.

eye on the progress of the brilliant young priest who exceeded all the rest both in study and monastic diligence, and made preparations for his advancement. In 1508 Martin Luther received his orders to the smaller convent at Wittenberg, where his duties would be to teach in the new and small university.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW THEOLOGY

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CHAPTER V
THE NEW THEOLOGY

1. Wittenberg

Sandicken, Sandicken, du bist ein Landicken!
Wenn ick di arbeit, biet du licht,
Wenn ick di meye, so finde ick night.¹

"What a land; nothing but sand!" wrote Martin Luther of Wittenberg. "You're easy to plow, but when harvest-time comes, nothing is there." During the decade that followed Luther's arrival at Wittenberg in 1508, practically everything about Wittenberg except the character of the soil underwent a radical change. Religious thinking changed. The town changed. The university changed.

Martin Luther changed. For him the decade was a tremendously exciting one marked by lectures, disputations, a trip to Rome, and his first regular preaching. "Noah is the cook-pot of my hope,"² was the text of one of his earliest sermons,³ and is developed in the best medieval manner by a

¹Cited by Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 48.

²Psalms, 60:8.

³Preached before Christmas, 1514 (Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 120 f.

free use of allegories to wring the text dry of every possible meaning. The cook-pot is the world, proclaimed Luther, and the three legs of the pot are the evil lusts mentioned in John I, 2:16 -- lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and vain-glory of life. The cook is Christ, and the meal cooking in the pot is man, particularly martyrs who are thus being prepared as a savory dish for Christ and the angels, who are stirring up the fire. Christ is allowing the ungodly to prosper and torment the saints in every way; furthermore, if the water does not come to a boil Christ himself puts on the lid to increase the torments. Thus the saints not only get to a boil, but also steam, sending up thereby the incense of their prayer to God.

A tremendous change indeed came to Martin Luther: six years later he was writing the direct, challenging, overpowering monuments of Christian literature the Address to the Christian Nobility, On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church, and the Liberty of a Christian Man. Practically every biographer of Martin Luther and almost every historian of the German Reformation has attempted to locate with finality the moment at which Luther made the trenchant religious discovery that led to the Reformation. Their conclusions have run the range of the years between 1509 and 1516, but all have without question set the date within the decade after he first arrived at Wittenberg.⁴

⁴⁰. Ritschl and Seeberg place the discovery in the early Erfurt lectureship. Scheel sets it in the period of the preparation for the lectures on the Psalms: the summer

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work. It is followed by a detailed account of the various projects and the results achieved. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and a list of the names of the persons who have taken part in it.

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During these critical years Luther worked with the incredible energy of a sort of human machine. He not only prepared lectures on the longest and most difficult books of the Bible, but continued study for his biblical and theological degrees, and read voluminously in the field of his personal religious problem. In addition he learned the two difficult Biblical languages without a teacher. Whatever may have been the social, political and economic factors that nurtured the Reformation into full strength, it was born in the discovery of a university professor who drove his way through the standard and rockbound theological interpretations of the iustitia Dei as the fearful iustitia damnaans, to a loving, free and revolutionary concept of the justice of God as miser cordia salvans, the mercy which saves. This basic concept was won by Luther at Wittenberg.

The University of Wittenberg was transformed. When Luther began to lecture there in 1508 there were 179 students, though the school had formally opened in 1502 with 410. A student in 1521 said, "There are more than fifteen hundred students here, nearly all of whom ... carry their Bibles about with them." Students were soon to come to Wittenberg from many countries, and Melancthon once counted eleven

of 1513. Boehmer inclines to the same opinion. Muller makes it to fall in the end of 1514. In any case it seems to have been a growing conception which did not reach its full expression even in the Ninety-five Theses, but rather later in the trio of works of 1520. (See Robert Herndon Life, Young Luther [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928], pp. 104 f.)

different languages being spoken at his table.⁵

Frederick the Wise, Elector of the rather poor and chiefly agricultural state of Saxony, had set up the university for his domain in 1502. In 1490 when the Saxon territory had been divided between the Ernestine and Albertine lines, the Electorate of Saxony had been left without a school of higher learning. It was a heroic venture: there was not much money for such an undertaking, and other universities had long drawn the few young men of Saxony who desired higher education. Von Staupitz and Frederick labored together to bring the school into being. There were the proceeds of a sale of papal indulgences of several years before that Frederick had not permitted to leave the country, and this money was used for the university! A number of the professors were provided with benefices belonging to the Castle Church at Wittenberg, and the two Wittenberg monasteries were commanded to furnish and maintain several more. Staupitz collected promising young monks and had them enrolled as students. Dr. Martin Pollich, physician, jurist, theologian, called Lux Mundi because of his learning, was made rector, and Staupitz dean of the Theological Faculty. Another Augustinian was selected dean of the Arts Faculty. The patron saints of the Augustinians, who had so much to do with the launching of the school that it might almost be considered their own establishment, were chosen to watch over the future of the

⁵Ernest Carroll Moore, The Story of Instruction (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 485.

new university: the Virgin and Augustine became the general patrons, and Paul was assigned to the Faculty of Theology. Imperial privileges were secured from the Emperor Maximilian, and the University of Wittenberg was opened on October 18, 1502 with four hundred students and twenty-two professors. By the summer of 1505 the enrollment had fallen to fifty-six, but Staupitz pled with the elector to persevere in his plan.⁶

Wittenberg, itself, was not an attractive town. It was located in the center of Germany, on the banks of the Elbe far from any important trade routes, and was built on a low, sandy plain surrounded for miles by low hills and rocky, sterile soil. A census of 1513 revealed that its three thousand inhabitants possessed only three hundred and fifty taxable houses. Valentine Polich of Kellernstadt said that "in Wittenberg one dwells as if in a carrion pit," and Luther complained that "the Wittenbergers dwell on the outskirts of civilization," and they were "disobliging, discourteous, and without regard for the finer and higher culture." Michael Cochleaus, an impassioned foe who would have happily been rid of the "infamous, blaspheming, heretical scamp" Luther, turned his picturesque venom on Wittenberg. Apparently the town furnished ample scope for his bitter tongue:

It is a poor, wretched, filthy town, hardly worth a red cent in comparison with Prague. Indeed, it is not worthy of being called a town in Germany. It is

⁶See Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 485; also Thomas W. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp. 205 f., and James William Richard, *Philip Melancthon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), p. 30.

a town with an unhealthy and disagreeable climate, without vineyards, orchards, or fruit-bearing trees, with an atmosphere like that of a beer-cellar, altogether uncouth and made unpleasant by the smoke and frost. What would Wittenberg be if it were not for the castle and the chapter house and the university? Without these one would see nothing but Lutheran - that is to say filthy - houses, dirty streets, and all the roads, paths, and alleys filled with slop. One would find a barbarous people which trades only in beer and catch-penny merchandise. Its market is not peopled. Its town has no citizenry. The people wear small-town clothing, and there is great poverty and want among its inhabitants.⁷

The Castle Church, the collegiate chapter house of All Saints connected with the castle, the lecture hall of the university, and the parish church of St. Mary's were the only prominent buildings in town. The Gray Cloister of the Franciscan monks was located in the northwestern part of town, and the Black Cloister of the Augustinian priests in the eastern. The Castle Church was the main source of fame for the town, whose inhabitants were mostly farmers and small scale craftsmen and held a salt monopoly for the whole territory from Frederick the Mild. On Misericordias Domini Sunday the narrow galleries of the Castle Church were crowded with pilgrims who came to see the five thousand relics treasured there, and gain the benefit of the fourteen hundred and forty-three years of indulgence to be gained from adoring them. It was a distinguished collection which included a piece of the Burning Bush, nine thorns from the Crown of Thorns, thirty-five fragments from the Cross, stalks of hay and straw upon

⁷Boehmer, op. cit., p. 47; written in 1524.

which the Christ Child lay, a few remnants from the manger, cradle and swaddling clothes, bits of hair, camisole, coat, girdle, veil and milk of the Blessed Virgin, not less than two hundred and four parts of bodies of the innocent Babes of Bethlehem, and one Babe complete. In addition to securing all these benefits, a pilgrim could receive the benefit of the Portiuncula Indulgence granted to the church in 1398 with the promise of "remission of punishment and guilt for all repented sins."⁸ A trip to Wittenberg to view these wondrous things was well worth the effort; that is, it was until Martin Luther changed all that and made Wittenberg the shrine of the evangelical Reformation.

2. Luther as Lecturer in Philosophy

Martin Luther was assigned to the struggling university at Wittenberg by von Staupitz to teach dialectic and ethics. The dialectic was, of course, based on Aristotle's Logic, and the ethics course was an exposition of the Greek philosopher's Nichomachean Ethics, which was scheduled at two o'clock in the afternoon, four days a week. The teaching of Aristotle was an interruption of Luther's theological studies, and was an unwelcome distraction from the important matters into which he had begun to sink his teeth at Erfurt. When he complained to von Staupitz, the dean of the Theological

⁸Boehmer, op. cit., p. 50.

Faculty urged his young professor to study theology so that he might teach it in the upper faculty. So, in addition to leading student disputations three evenings each week and attending lectures in Biblical subjects, Luther began a study of Augustine. It was probably during this period that he began to preach in the little twenty-by-thirty foot chapel of wood and clay. He also began the study of Hebrew with the aid of Reuchlin's Rudimenta, but without the help of an instructor, for there was no professor of languages at Wittenberg. With his overwhelming interest in theology, the philosophical lectures became a great burden, and in a letter to a friend in Eisenach, written in the spring of 1509, he complained bitterly of the grind.

On March 9, 1509, Luther was admitted to the degree of biblius baccalauerus, an honor which increased rather than lessened his responsibilities, for he had to begin a series of lectures on a book of the Bible without giving up the courses in philosophy.⁹ In addition he pressed resolutely on toward the degree of Sententiarius, which meant a thorough review of the Sentences of Peter Lombard on which the degree would qualify him to deliver lectures. Luther borrowed the cloister copy of the Sentences from the library, and, in accordance with the custom of the time, entered his comments and study notes in the margin.¹⁰ After one semester of concentrated

⁹Pife, op. cit., p. 136.

¹⁰The notes are available in the ninth volume of the Weimar edition of Luther's works.

study, he applied for the degree, held his public disputation and passed the examination. The degree was conferred, and only the formal ceremony of the first lecture remained when Luther received unexpected orders to return to his mother cloister in Erfurt.

3. Luther as Assistant in Theology

When Luther reported for his new duties at Erfurt, it became apparent that he had been recalled by his old professor, Dr. Nathin, who needed an assistant. A lecturer in theology, however, was required to hold the Sententiarius degree, and the faculty at the old and established University of Erfurt refused to recognize the degree granted at the unproven institution at Wittenberg. However a compromise was finally reached, Luther gave his formal inaugural address in the university auditorium, and the next day began to lecture on the Sentences of Peter Lombard to a small class of Cloister students assigned to him by Dr. Nathin, who continued to offer the more important course in the university. He continued these lectures three or four times a week until October of 1510, continuing his study of Hebrew and Augustine. During these lectures Luther became a critical scholar, establishing the false authorship of two writings which medieval scholars had attributed to Augustine, and attacking Wimpfeling for questioning the Augustinian authorship of the Augustinian

Rule.¹¹

It was while he was buried in Hebrew, Augustine and Lombard that the city of Erfurt was shaken by open revolt, and though Luther was probably relatively untouched by the disturbances of the "Mad Year," he could not but have tasted his first experience with mob violence. For several years the city council had been struggling with the Archbishop of Mainz who was trying to control the affairs of the city. For some time the city had been able to balance the favorable power of the Elector of Saxony against the encroachments of the Archbishop, but only at great financial cost and the price of preoccupation with affairs outside of the city. The lower classes of the town felt the results in intolerable tax burdens and lax internal administration of city problems, and in January of 1510 they arose and overthrew the municipal council. On June 24 Henry Kelner, the head of the deposed Council of Four, was executed, and on the fourth of August a mob battered down the gates of the university and burned and pillaged the university library. The city was clearly set against the band of "foreigners," students who had come to the university from outside the city and had very little interest in the internal problems of Erfurt. Though the "town and gown" riots do not appear in Luther's later writings, the antagonism toward the university could hardly have left even the protected life of the Augustinian monastery untouched, for it was closely connected with the school in

¹¹Roehmer, op. cit., pp. 34 f.

many ways.¹²

At any rate, there were other tensions drawing to a crisis within the Black Cloister at Erfurt which had more immediate significance for Martin Luther. On September 30, 1510 a bull from Cardinal Cavaajal, the German papal legate, was published authorizing a unification of twenty-nine Augustinian monasteries in the territory of Saxony. Twenty-two monasteries approved the union, but even under threats from the General of the order, Erfurt and six other houses rejected the move and prepared to send Dr. Mathin and Father Luther to Halle for the purpose of securing permission from the Archbishop of Magdeburg to make a formal appeal to the Cardinal. The purpose of the whole action as conceived by the Augustinian General, Egidio Canisio of Viterbo, was a reformation of the Saxon monasteries. His plan was that the vicar-general of the order, John von Staupitz, would become head of the new Saxony organization, with power to enforce rigorous application of the Rule of Augustine and extensive reorganization of the individual houses. The bull authorizing the plan was issued by Cardinal Cavaajal in December of 1507, but General Canisio had not published the document until he had

¹²Pfeife (op. cit., pp. 52 f.) says that the riots had little or no effect on Luther's later thinking, and "play no part in Luther's correspondence or reflections." Boehmer (op. cit., p. 56) concludes: "Even at that time he had decided unequivocally against the rioters. He never forgave the Erfurters for the violent outrages of this mad year. He later dated the decline of the city from the execution of Kelner, and on this occasion applied to Erfurt the proverb: 'Proud spirit, secret jealousy, childish counsel: these three destroyed Rome and Troy.'"

already completed all of the arrangements necessary to carry his plan into effect. It was a high-handed procedure with which Augustinians were not accustomed, and it was natural that the Cloister of highly educated and independent men at Erfurt would be the one to lead in the revolt, in spite of the threats of punishment that Canisio held over local leaders. When the appeal of the Erfurt representatives was denied by the Archbishop at Halle, Nathin and Luther set out immediately for Nuremberg for a meeting with the Franciscan district vicar, Simon Kayser. Here, in conference with the Augustinian Cloister at Nuremberg which sided with the Erfurt Cloister in the dispute, it was decided to send two brothers to Italy for the purpose of appealing directly to the pope. One of these delegates was apparently an older priest of the Nuremberg monastery who would be familiar with Vatican protocol, and the other was Martin Luther.¹³

The winter of 1510 was an unusually severe one in Europe, but the Augustinian delegates set out for Rome before the middle of November, equipped with letters of introduction to all the houses of the brotherhood along the way. Once the hard journey was over and they were safely in Rome, the inevitable delays began. The pope, himself, was away at his winter palace with most of his court, and the case of the Augustinian emissaries was referred to the papal procurator. The procurator referred the problem back to General Canisio, who was of

¹³The story is told in all the biographies, but the best account I know is given by Boehmer (op. cit., pp. 58-68).

course in favor of his own plan, but sent a German secretary back to Saxony to make an effort to bring the cloisters of Erfurt and Nuremberg into line. It was four weeks until a reply could be received, and Luther plunged into the wonders of Rome with all the enthusiasm of any first visitor.

The only unusual aspect of Luther's sightseeing trips about Rome was the unpleasant weather, for the rain fell in torrents most of the time he was there. In spite of the rain, and with the help of the popular tourist's guidebook, Mirabilia urbis Romae, he did and saw everything that every other pilgrim of the time would have done. He visited the seven major churches of the city on foot, in a single day. He climbed the twenty-eight steps of the so-called Scala Sancta on his knees, and later remembered wondering as he climbed if the story of the spiritual benefit of his act were really true. He said mass in as many of the churches as possible, and when he inspected the catacombs he was especially impressed with the thought of the martyrs that were buried there. The pope was not in Rome so he did not have an opportunity to see His Holiness, but he heard the popular stories about Alexander VI and his bastard children, and like all the pilgrims to Rome he was disillusioned, horrified and distressed. Some of the stories were later shown to be partly gossip, but they were believed by everyone who heard them and it was difficult to know where truth became fiction. He himself said that he ran about Rome "like a mad saint," but his experiences and impressions seem to have been no different from those of

contemporary travelers in Rome.

At last the emissary returned to Rome from Saxony, and the two Augustinian delegates were called to another conference with General Canisio. They were given the impression that the General would give up his plan of reorganization, and they set out on their journey northward. In April, 1511, another vote was taken on the matter, but the controversy had deepened, and when the votes were counted only Martin Luther and John Lang voted to make peace with Staupitz, presenting with some force their argument that continued opposition was in defiance of their vow of obedience to superiors, and harmful to the condition of the church. Lang was expelled from the monastery, and went to Wittenberg where he matriculated as a student. Luther resumed the lectures on the Sentences, which had probably been continued during his five-month absence by another brother, but soon he too was "exiled" from the Erfurt monastery. Staupitz was at Wittenberg, and it was no doubt he who arranged the transfer, for by late summer of 1511 Luther was back at the University of Wittenberg lecturing now in the Theological Faculty. Thus the ties of friendship were drawn tighter, and Luther became the colleague of Staupitz who gave increasing responsibilities to the young brother who defended him. Staupitz dropped the union project in May of 1512 and tempers were still high when the announcement was made at Erfurt, but when in 1516 Luther as district vicar of the order returned John Lang as prior of the Erfurt monastery no objections were raised.

4. Luther as Doctor and Professor

John von Staupitz was an important man, both in the circles of the Augustinian canons and the educators of Wittenberg, and the young professor had not only demonstrated himself to be a loyal junior but was a hard-working teacher who gave promise of a brilliant educational future. As vicar-general of the Augustinians, Staupitz ordered Luther to begin preaching to the monks in the refectory, and as dean of the Theological Faculty he gave Luther instructions to prepare himself for the degree of doctor of theology.

The doctorate in theology was the highest academic honor that could be conferred by the medieval church, and it was a distinction carefully guarded by both church and universities. Erfurt required ten years of study as a minimum, and some men worked twenty years before receiving the degree. But man-made mountains can always be moved if the pressure is exerted in high enough circles, and Staupitz succeeded in persuading the faculty to waive the less strenuous requirements of Wittenberg.¹⁴ The year of delay seems to have been caused by the inability of Staupitz and Luther to raise the fee of fifty gulden required for the graduation rather than by any failure on the part of Staupitz to open the legal way for his protegee. During the year Luther continued to teach, and to plunge deeper

¹⁴Fife, op. cit., p. 158.

into Lombard, and through him to Augustine, from whom Lombard continually quotes. He read Augustine On the Trinity, and waded into the City of God, but he does not seem to have discovered Augustine's answers to his difficulties with the Occamist view of man's part in achieving salvation until he came to the African father's anti-Pelagian writings several years later. Greek and Hebrew were also subjects of Luther's continued study.

Early in June, 1512, Staupitz appointed Luther sub-prior at Wittenberg, and it became his duty to supervise the studies of the younger monks. On October 4th he was admitted to candidacy for the doctorate in theology, and on October 18 the promotion ceremonies began. In the evening there was a service in the castle church conducted by Professor Carlstadt, and at seven the next morning the promotion ceremony took place in the church. The candidate acknowledged the oaths of office: never to lecture on frivolous or strange doctrines which were condemned by the church, and to inform the dean within eight days of anyone who did teach such doctrines. Carlstadt gave Luther a closed Bible, and then symbolically opened it in the hand of the new doctor, the doctor's cap was formally placed on his head, and the doctor's ring on his finger.¹⁵ Discourses and disputations followed for several hours. On October 22nd he was formally received into the faculty, and on the next Monday he began teaching at seven in

¹⁵Fife says it was a golden ring (op. cit., p. 158); Boehmer says silver (op. cit., p. 85).

the morning with his first lecture on Genesis.¹⁶ Three weeks later he succeeded Staupitz as professor of theology, and within five years he was through study and debate to break through the intellectual walls of scholasticism and emerge before the people of Germany as the professor who had found the answer to the common man's religious dilemma.

Wittenberg was an ideal place for a young man who was battling with intellectual problems. It was a small town and far from any large ones with their typical distractions. He was surrounded with intelligent and well-trained men, and his lectures and disputations formed excellent sounding boards for new ideas. Life for an instructor in a higher faculty was relatively free, especially when compared with the many duties required of member of the lower faculties and the strict supervision maintained over them. There was no prescribed rotation of courses, and he was free to choose the topics for discussion in his lectures; any other duties were accepted more or less voluntarily. He offered one course a year from 1512 to 1521, and then he never lectured more than two hours a week.¹⁷ His first course in the Psalms lasted two years,¹⁸

¹⁶Fife, op. cit., pp. 158 f.; Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 84 ff.; Lindsay, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁷Boehmer, op. cit., p. 118.

¹⁸August 16, 1513 to July 13, 1515. Boehmer (op. cit., p. 118, footnote) lists the courses Luther offered in his career as a teacher:

Genesis: 1512-1513 (?), 1535-1545.

Psalms: 1513-1515, 1518-1521, 1532-1535.

Isaiah: 1528-1530.

Minor Prophets: 1524-1526.

Song of Solomon: 1520-1531.

and the vital lectures on Romans continued for over a year, but this was better than average headway, for some medieval lecturers had spent as much as three years in the explanation of a single chapter of the Bible.¹⁹

Ecclesiastes: July to November, 1526.

Romans: 1515-1516.

Galatians: 1516-1517, July 8 to December 12, 1531.

I John: August 19 to November 27, 1527.

I Timothy: January 13 to March 13, 1528.

Titus and Philemon: November 1 to December 18, 1527.

Hebrews: 1517-1518.

¹⁹Lynn Thorndike, University Records and Life in the Middle Ages [New York: Columbia University Press, 1944], #157, pp. 354 f.) gives an important document that is of interest here: "Order of Lecturing on Books of the Bible by Doctors of Theology, Determined by the Faculty of Theology thereto Assembled, July 20, 1469 (at Heidelberg):

Because the foundation of the Catholic faith and the Christian religion is recognized to consist in the texts of holy canonical scripture, therefore to give opportunity to the masters and scholars of the faculty of theology to teach the same more fervently, completely and perfectly, and especially in those which are known to be more important than others, the said faculty of theology, having held mature deliberation on the subject, has enacted, decreed and ordained that henceforth the following order of reading the books of the Bible shall be observed by its masters, in order that their hearers may receive greater fruits from their lectures.

Also, that the three doctors now receiving salaries as ordinary professors in theology, and in like wise their successors, shall so proceed and be held to proceed and lecture, namely, that one of them shall lecture on the Gospels, finishing these in twelve years. Another shall lecture on the Pauline and other canonical Epistles, together with the Apocalypse, completing them in the same number of years, namely twelve. The third one of them shall read the books of Moses or the Pentateuch, or the major and minor prophets, in like manner completing them in the same number of years, namely twelve.

If there are other lecturers, the fourth shall lecture on the Books of Moses, if not read by one of the doctors, for twelve years, and if they are covered by a doctor, on the prophets. The fifth shall cover the Psalms in twelve years, and the sixth man, if there should be one, is directed to work on

Though his duties at the university were rather light, Luther's practical mind soon led him into a complexity of activities. In 1511 he became the preacher in the monastery, and in 1514 he began to preach at least twice a week in the parish church in the village. For three years he was subprior of the school for priests at the monastery, and in 1515 he was made district vicar over eleven cloisters. In 1516 he wrote to his friend John Lang,

I am convent preacher, the reader at meals, am asked to deliver a sermon daily at the parish church, am district vicar (that is, eleven times prior), business manager of our fish-hatchery at Litzkau, attorney in our case versus the Herzbergers now pending at Torgau, lecturer on St. Paul, assistant lecturer on the Psalter, besides having my correspondence ... which occupies most of my time.²⁰

It was during this period that he began the habit of taking the whole of Saturday in his room to catch up on his breviary and required religious exercises. In all his preaching Luther seems to have been thoroughly traditional during this period. He worked out every sermon carefully in Latin before he delivered it, and never extemporized in the pulpit.²¹ His subjects

Job and Solomon for twelve years. Thorndike points out in a footnote on page 355 that Aeneas Sylvius is said to have remembered that Thomas of Haselback spent twenty-two years explaining the first chapter of Isaiah, but this story is somewhat exaggerated since it appears that Thomas actually spent only 1428 to 1431 on the first four chapters, and from 1428 to 1460 on the next sixteen. Hency of Hesse at the University of Vienna took thirteen years on the first four chapters of Genesis. The regulations passed by the faculty at Heidelberg were apparently a needed reform.

²⁰Preserved Smith, The Life and Letters of Martin Luther (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1911), p. 38.

²¹Boehmer, op. cit., p. 120.

also were the standard ones: the Ten Commandments,²² and the Lord's Prayer.²³

5. The Lectures on Psalms and Romans

Doctor Luther's early lectures seem to have been quite unoriginal in form and method, and it was only as he began to get into the Epistle to the Romans and to feel security in his own method and developing thought that indications of freedom and creativeness begin to appear.²⁴ He follows implicitly the standard practice of dividing his presentation of each verse into glossae, scholia, and exegesis. The glossae were brief explanations of the words and terms involved in the passage, and the students were supposed to copy these notes into their copybooks. Then the professor dictated the scholia, comments of his own upon special passages. Luther's exegesis was also conventional, being based at first on the Vulgate. During the Psalms course Luther began using the Hebrew original, and after Erasmus' edition of the New Testament was available he always used Greek for his lectures on

²²June 21, 1516 to February 24, 1517.

²³March and April, 1517.

²⁴Boehmer (op. cit., pp. 121 f.) points out that rather extensive portions of Luther's early lectures have been preserved. Some of them are in the Weimar edition of Luther's works. Most of the work on the Psalms, and the complete manuscripts of the Romans course are extant. Only student notes are available for the lectures on Galatians and Hebrews. However, the work on Romans is most significant.

the Epistle to the Romans. Following the medieval exegetes he gave each verse allegorical, moralistic and analogical meanings; and in his interpretation of the Psalms he discarded the literal interpretation usually added to the three above, because the Psalms were prophecies and referred directly to Christ. Boehmer says that his work on the Psalms reveals a great "unevenness," for there will be an extended essay on some verses, and then long, difficult and interesting passages will be passed by almost without comment.²⁵ It was not until he reached Paul in 1515 and 1516 that Luther began to call upon his own personal experience as an aid in interpretation. In the lectures on Romans he gives the first glimpse of originality of method when he deserts the other medieval interpretations to rely solely on the literal, so-called grammatico-historical method. Then it was that he began to question the tradition of Paul's journey to Spain, and called attention to the difficulties raised by the long list of greetings in the last chapter of the letter.

The interpretation of the Psalms was accomplished in the scholastic tradition in which Luther had been trained. It was a tremendous task as dictated by the painstaking scholastic method: the glossae and scholia make up over a hundred pages of fine print in the Weimar edition. The lecturer called up the work of his predecessors from Augustine, Cassiodorus and Bernard to Nicholas of Lyra and Gabriel Beil, and then debated with them in presenting his own comments. He

²⁵Boehmer, op. cit., p. 123.

dipped into the contemporary history of the book for illustrations and explanations. It was a huge and technical undertaking to interpret the longest book in the Bible, but it was through these lectures and their preparation that Luther gained a facility in the scholastic method that gave him a sense of security, and when he opened his course in the Epistle to the Romans it was with the assurance and freedom that comes only after a man has passed his apprenticeship.

"The sum and substance of this Epistle is to destroy and scatter all wisdom and justice of the flesh ... and to set fast and confirm and magnify sin."²⁶ These are the significant first words of the scholia for the course on the Epistle to the Romans. The course opened about Easter of 1515 and ran continuously until the end of the summer session of 1518, and during that time the future course of religious history was being determined. Luther himself was probably conscious of no more than a growing security in his own thinking and clarity of expression as the months of study and lecture went by. Students began to realize, perhaps vaguely, that something important was happening in Doctor Luther's course on the Epistle. If for nothing else, the course was distinguished as probably the first in medieval history to use the vernacular in interpreting a Biblical text. John Oldecop of Hildesheim, later an enemy of Luther, reported that "the students liked to hear him, for no one like him had been heard there who translated so boldly every Latin word."²⁷ The professor's

²⁶ Fife, op. cit., p. 188.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 185, citing Oldecop, Chronik, p. 47.

illustrations came from the contemporary world, and dramatically now and then from vivid expressions of the German Rathskeller, making subtle philosophical distinctions pale and uninteresting by comparison. After the ninth chapter the Greek text of Erasmus was the standard source for interpretation, and this use of the original language was as fresh and new as the use of the vernacular, both of which had been unknown in an academic world conversant only with Latin. Luther's long years of routine and extracurricular study had given him a tremendous grasp of theological literature, and he quoted freely from the classics of Seneca and Aesop, the mysticism of Bernard and Tauler, the philosophy of Scotus and Occam. One scholar has found Augustine cited one hundred and twenty-four times in the lectures, the De spiritu et littera alone twenty-six times.²⁸

6. Search for Satisfaction

One of Luther's two announced aims in the lectures was to "set fast and confirm and magnify sin," and he reached out into the familiar everyday life of Germany to achieve his purpose. Sin had become for Luther the greatest single reality of mortal life, and with his orator's tongue he compelled sin to come in from the streets and walk the lecture platform with him. The current scandal from Strassburg where the city

²⁸Strohl; cited by Rife, op. cit., p. 188, footnote.

was trying to bring a censure of the church to justice, was fuel for his flame. The continuous struggle of the city council of Wittenberg to remain independent of the Archbishop of Brandenburg became a part of his lectures. The disgraceful rivalry between the Elector of Saxony and the Archbishop of Mainz in the collection of holy relics became illustrative material for the classroom. He struck out fearlessly at the clergy, whose ranks his students were being trained to join: "These stupid and godless ecclesiastics who strut about with the goods which they have received from the laity and think that they are doing enough when they mutter a few prayers on behalf of their benefactors." "It would certainly be better," he said, "if the temporal affairs of the clergy were placed under the secular power."²⁹ Sin became a vivid and bitter reality for all who heard the lectures on Romans.

Luther's other declared aim was to "destroy and scatter all wisdom and justice of the flesh." It was here that he came to grips with the Occamist philosophy that by willing to do good man may achieve enough merit to earn salvation from a reluctant God. At every opportunity he coldly takes apart the Occamist logic, and then hurls his most withering blasts at those who continue to hold such a position: "O stulti! O Sautheologen!" he cries, "O stupids! O pig-theologians," are those who believe that man can love God by his own will and achieve salvation through his own power. His own

²⁹Pife, op. cit., pp. 202 f.

experience was a clear case that no one could earn salvation by good works, for he had desperately and vainly tried; the depraved condition of human nature was too profound:

It is an error to think that this evil is cured by works, since experience shows that in spite of all our good works this desire for evil endures and no one is free from it, not even a day-old child.³⁰

The positive element in Luther's teaching was the creative element, and came straight from the mind of Paul; from it grew the theology that was to become known as "evangelical" and "Protestant." It is contained, at least in the abstract, in the lectures on Romans. Man must give up any reliance upon his own abilities, and cast himself upon God; the sense of sin and despair is normal and right, and is the condition of salvation. This is possible because God is not a God of arbitrary justice and punishment, but a God of love whose chief mercy is the fact that he does not impute man's sins to man. When man simply lays hold on the love of God by faith, he is granted forgiveness, and by divine grace is justified so that he may take his place in the presence of God: the just man lives by faith.

A. Tauler and the Theologia Germanica

Two factors were of definitive influence as Luther sought to interpret Paul and his own experience during the lecture course on Romans: the mystical theology of Tauler and the Theologia Germanica, and the personal association and

³⁰Pfeife, op. cit., p. 189.

balancing wisdom of John von Staupitz.

In Luther's own mind the sermons of Tauler and the message of the Theologia Germanica were identical, for he always assumed Tauler to have been the author of the little book of mystical Christian philosophy he called the German Theology. As a matter of fact the Theologia belonged to the middle of the fourteenth century. John Tauler died in 1361, and the theology of the two is strikingly similar; it was a natural conclusion to think that Tauler was the author, but modern scholarship is certain that the Theologia was written by an unknown priest and warden of the house of the Teutonic Order at Frankfort.³¹ Two ideas - the passive reception of God by the Christian, and the necessity for loving God without egoistic motives - are basic to both Tauler and the Theologia Germanica and appear with growing clarity in the lectures on the Romans. "Happy is he alone who is always in fear," Luther quoted from Job, in support of his new-found conviction that the only way to God is through suffering. The soul must endure God until the assurance of grace has come. This concept of Gott leiden is fundamental to fourteenth century German mysticism: men cannot force God, but must wait in patient faith and love until God forces man and his will is united with the divine will.³²

³¹James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925), Vol. I, p. 213.

³²Kingsley terms the Theologia Germanica "a golden book"; Rufus James praises it as "the literary gem" of German mysticism, and Dean Inge thought thought that it was "superior to the Imitation of Christ."

Both Tauler and the German Theology were products of the fourteenth century mystical movement known as the Friends of God. The Friends of God was not an organized body, but one of those popular stirrings of unofficial revival that frequently swept across Europe during the medieval period. In the fourteenth century men were moved to new devotion and to seek extratemporal certainty by the devastations of the Black Death and the less tangible darkness that was closing down over Europe following the breakdown of the so-called High Middle Ages. It was exclusively a layman's movement, and was one of the first of a series of reactions against the religion of a demoralized priesthood. They vigorously denounced corruption, thinking of themselves as the true spiritual church within the Catholic organization; devotedly read the Bible for which they claimed to receive interpretation from the Holy Spirit, and in general laid the most stress on subjective religious experience. Sometimes their zeal for mystic union with God and escape from the uncertainties and unpleasantness of this world led them to morbidity and psychic excesses.

Because of its freedom, the movement led to wide differences of expression. Suso represented the psychic extreme, and Tauler and the Theologia the intelligent and practical party. Suso has left an autobiography which has preserved his name and experience. He refused for many years, inspired by the love of God, to take a bath. In order to discipline his body for better contemplation of God he slept in a shirt

studded with dozens of sharp nails. Morbidly he felt that dirt and laceration were paths to the knowledge of God. After sixteen years of almost psychopathic excesses he was moved by the Spirit to give up this kind of search for God and devote himself to preaching and service. In Italy the movement enlisted Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Sienna, both saints in their own right. Jan Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris, was a follower, and in England Rolle and Walter Hilton combined contemplation with service in the best tradition of the Friends of God. Nicholas of Basel, Henry of Nordlingen, Rulman Merswin, Margaret and Christina Ebner, were all distinguished followers of the mystic way.³³ Martin Luther's mind was too practical, and his brush with ascetic mysticism in the Black Cloister at Erfurt was too recent a failure, for him to follow the mystic path of the Friends, and their theories of soul ecstasy he termed an "ecstatic and negative theology."³⁴

The basic direction of the theology of mysticism as represented by the more intellectual representatives of the movement, however, found in Luther an eager reader. He was fascinated to find in them the answer to the Occamists that he had been groping for: the Theologia emphasized sin as self-will and self-confidence before God, the direct opposite of the Occamist doctrine of will that had been so troublesome to

³³James Mackinnon, The Origins of the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939), p. 379.

³⁴Rife, op. cit., p. 212.

Luther. Salvation has been made possible by God through Christ, was the argument of the German Theology, and could be obtained through no act of the will apart from God. Though the ancient booklet by no means contained even the outlines of Luther's developing theology, it gave him standing ground in the past. The confidence that was established in him through the discovery of this kindred spirit from another age probably led him to feel that the work possessed more similarities to his own thinking than anyone else would be able to discover there, but he was so thrilled with the book that he published a fragment of it in 1516 under the title A Spiritual Noble Book, and two years later the whole work, A German Theology. "Let anyone who will read this little book," he wrote, "and then say whether our theology is old or new. I thank God that I this hear and find my God in the German tongue, as I, and they along with me, have not hitherto found either in the Latin, Greek, or Hebrew tongue."³⁵

Unquestionably others had significant influence upon Luther and labored simultaneously upon Romans and his own theology during these years. "If," he wrote to Spalatin in December of 1516, "you take delight in pure and solid theology in the German language - a theology very similar to the ancients - get the sermons of John Tauler of the Order of Preachers, of whose teaching I send you herewith an epitome."³⁶ He read

³⁵ Werke (Weimar), Vol. I, pp. 378 f.

³⁶ Mackinnon, Origins of the Reformation, p. 333.

Bernard of Clairvaux, whose work On the Love of God spoke of rising from self-love to love of one's fellowman to the pure and sublime love of God. But Bernard also taught that this achievement was possible through contemplation and the cultivation of one's own reason and strength. Gerard Zerbolt, third head of the Brethren of the Common Life, furnished important notions of love and service in the search for God. The Bible remained a constant guide and Augustine a continual companion in the fretful search.

B. John von Staupitz

No man, however, can successfully fight the battle for spiritual peace with only the companionship of books. John von Staupitz was the man whose personal touch kept the scales of Luther's spirit in balance. Though they were never really intimate friends, for Staupitz was an older man and was always Luther's ecclesiastical superior, and though they never really agreed on Luther's solution of the problem, Staupitz was the personal counselor Luther desperately needed.

Staupitz had been trained at Cologne and Leipzig, and was a follower of Thomas Aquinas rather than of Duns Scotus and William of Occam. As a follower of the via antiqua of the realists, his views were quite different on many vital points from those Luther had heard at Erfurt where the via moderna of the nominalists held sway. Staupitz denied the Occamist position that man can know, will or do any good thing in his own strength, and held that such ability for

righteousness is possessed by a man only if he belongs to the elect and has received divine grace through the ministration of the sacraments.³⁷ Staupitz was also a disciple of the Devotio Moderna of the Brethren of the Common Life, and through his influences of Luther's younger days were reasserted. The impact of the Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis had turned Staupitz to Christ as the source of love and salvation for man; Christ has shown the possibility of blending human and divine elements in normal mortal life, and salvation for man; Christ has shown the possibility of blending human and divine elements in normal mortal life, and salvation ceases to be as with the mystics, a temporary suspension of the essential distinction between divine and human. It was Staupitz who gave to Luther the idea that repentance begins with the love of God, which Luther said struck him like a thunderbolt. This flat contradiction of Gabriel Biel and Bernard of Clairvaux, who thought salvation was achieved by a process of loving self, then man and finally God, was a direct statement of Luther's own experience. It was Staupitz who said to Luther one day, "One must contemplate that man who is called Christ." This reassertion of the central emphasis of the Devotio Moderna over against the teaching of the Occamists that Christ's death must be supplemented by the righteous achievements of men, was another stroke of lightning to Martin Luther.

³⁷For insights into Staupitz' thinking I am indebted to Boehmer (op. cit., pp. 99-111).

Two pamphlets published by Staupitz in 1517 may have been written under the impact of Luther's search, but at least indicate the interaction of the thinking of these two men. The first, On Predestination, was a generally Thomistic argument, but ventures the observation that the principal problem of religion is how man can attain the saving love of God. On the Love of God, which appeared several months later, is an attempt to meet the problem.³⁸ Love, wrote Staupitz, "is born only out of the revelation of God's love toward us," and this revelation is always "pure, unalloyed grace," and never the product of human effort. Staupitz points out that the operation of this grace is unrestricted by the progress any man may have made along the mystical ladder of loving self, man and God, but may be granted at any time. The man who possesses this love can do nothing but seek the glory of God, and therefore is wholly righteous. The two men never reached agreement concerning the implications of this sort of thinking, but in their basic notions they were very close together. Through the years that Luther was laboring with the Psalms, Romans, and his own theology, Staupitz was an ever helpful guide and counselor.

When he had finished the course on Romans, Luther plunged in 1516 into Galatians, and in the next year began Hebrews. The records of these courses are very incomplete and the content is chiefly known through the class notes of

³⁸Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 99 f.

some of the students. The indication is that without the earnestness of the lectures on Romans, Luther restated more calmly and logically his basic conviction of the grace of God and the inability of man to win salvation by his own works.

C. The Humanists

All during these years Luther was working out the insights of the lecture hall in more popular form for his public preaching. In the sermons he was not confined to the definite progression of a single book of the Bible, but ranged the whole field of Biblical and current interest. His texts came from the Epistles and Gospels, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and they probe into the popular problems of penance, indulgence and excommunication. As the years went by Luther became less and less academic in his preaching: the scholastic intricacies began to disappear, as did the fantastic allegories of this earlier preaching, and he accepted fearlessly the practical implications of his theological thinking. He began to attack the church and the faith the ecclesiastical system encouraged in good works and official salvation. Preaching was at a low ebb throughout Europe, and Luther's growing power in the pulpit began to attract growing congregations from the cloister brethren, the university and the citizens of Wittenberg. In 1519 Luther began to preach exclusively in German, and the congregations grew even more rapidly. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that the ecclesiastical authorities did not think that the preaching in

Wittenberg demanded investigation.

It was inevitable, however, that the brilliant young professor and preacher at Wittenberg should attract some attention in higher circles. The contact came through the man who was the Elector's librarian, secretary and court preacher, but even this touch of the outside world of court life and humanistic thought left the splendid isolation of Luther's development uninfluenced. Martin Luther continued to develop in his own way, surrounded by his book, his colleagues, and the isolated little world of Wittenberg.

Spalatin, born George Burkhardt in Spalt near Nuremberg, as early as 1513 called Dr. Martinus "an excellent man and scholar whose judgment I value highly."³⁹ As the Elector's general adviser on intellectual matters, Spalatin's confidence in Luther made the professor's opinion on matters at the Elector's university in Wittenberg of great importance, and Luther was able to gain support for a plan of reform at the university that bore remarkable resemblance to the general program of the humanists in other universities. Spalatin was well known as a humanist, and when Luther proposed the abolition of Aristotle from the philosophical faculty, the ejection of medieval scholasticism from the theological curriculum, and the founding of permanent chairs of Greek and Hebrew, Luther's reputation as a humanist began to spread in the closely interrelated humanist circles of northern Europe.

³⁹Boehmer, op. cit., p. 157.

But Martin Luther was never a humanist in any sense of the term, he remained completely independent of humanist attitudes, and he never sought to be associated with humanist circles: the only humanists with whom he remained on friendly terms for any length of time were Spalatin, his old friend Lang, and his best friend, Philip Melancthon. In 1517 he ceased signing his name as Luder, and adopted the classical form Eleutherius, but within two years he had settled on the more German Luther, which he used consistently for the rest of his life. In his Latin letters to his trio of humanist friends he occasionally used Greek expressions, but after 1519 even this humanistic playfulness came to an end. In 1517 he wrote of Erasmus, the most distinguished representative of humanism in Europe:

I fear he does not promote the cause of Christ and God's grace sufficiently. For him human considerations have an absolute preponderance over divine ... No one is truly wise in the Christian sense simply because he knows Greek and Hebrew.⁴⁰

The so-called "break" with humanism never took place: Luther was never a real humanist. In most of his thinking he never lost the stamp of the modern scholasticism he learned at Erfurt, and it continued to come to the surface in ways that revealed how deeply he differed in spirit from the humanists. When he became involved during the late 1520's in a controversy with the humanist Zwingli concerning the Lord's Supper, his statements of the presence of the body of Christ in the

⁴⁰Boehmer, op. cit., p. 160.

eucharist and the proofs, analogies and philosophical terminology with which he supported his doctrine came straight from Occam, d'Ailly and Biel. Even as a Protestant he later continued the scholastic justification of the confessional, and when he was forced to justify the bigamy of Philip of Hesse, his arguments were based squarely in the dialectic of Occam. His whole attitude toward nature and the operation of natural law as the only legitimate sphere for the operation of human reason, and his dogged distrust of human reason because of its utter incapability in the realm of faith, find their ultimate root in the teachings of Occam.

The humanists placed their reliance on the wonders of human reason; Martin Luther was a man of religious sensitiveness for whom nothing had meaning that did not lead him directly to God. About 1517 Luther wrote a verse to be put on his personal seal:

Des Christen Herz auf Rosen geht,
Auch wenn es untern Kreuze steht.⁴¹

"The Christian rests on beds of flowers" was his motto, "even though the cross above him towers." As the lectures on Romans progressed, Luther more and more deserted the traditional phrases of scholasticism for the expressions of German mysticism, and in those areas in which Occamist doctrine contradicted or obscured his personal religious insights, he could be extremely bitter and grandly illogical in denouncing the

⁴¹Wife, op. cit., p. 228, footnote.

logical school in which he had received his training. He had reached a pinnacle of spiritual security by a series of religious struggles that seemed to him to have no direct connection with any system of logic, and he could look from his security with bitter irony upon the time-honored systems of the theologians without and in spite of which he had come to salvation. To Luther himself the way of triumph seemed a series of sudden illuminations to be interpreted in terms of crisis and catastrophe, though from longer and cooler perspective the achievement appears more to have been a process of education into which had been woven the best thought and religious inspiration of a thousand years. Therefore the precise moment at which the insight of salvation by faith first occurred to Luther is not to the historian of primary significance. The change was nurtured through these years of study, preaching and teaching. Furthermore, the process was not wholly complete. The basic outlines of an academic theology were already clear, but there were readjustments yet to be made, particularly as other men developed his thought and precipitated crises that could not possibly have been foreseen. The process of education continued in drawing the implications of the theology for social and political problems. And most significant for the history of educational institutions, development and reaction erupted in catastrophes that demanded immediate, practical action if the mind as well as the spirit of the Reformation were to be preserved. Problems pyramided in alarming fashion as the dynamic revision of

medieval soteriology made by Martin Luther became known.

7. The Theology that Satisfied

Martin Luther's theology as it emerged during the early and creative years is not difficult to state, but it is very difficult to understand. From an especially vivid conviction of the guilt of sin and a complete despair of man's native abilities, both of which incur the just and fearful wrath of God, the logic proceeds through the mission of Christ without which God would never be known as the loving Father in whom undeserving man may have complete faith, to the free outpouring of grace which justifies the sinner in the presence of God and places him in the society of the redeemed solely by the authoritative will of God, an act to which any degree of righteousness attained by the individual is totally irrelevant. Just what this means when corollaries are expanded and implications developed, and what it meant to the mind of Martin Luther, are areas of investigation that will occupy the mind of theologians as long as there is a Protestant Christianity.

The point at which Luther took his creative departure from the medieval scholastic theology he had been taught was located in his own personal religious experience: Luther was convinced by his own experience of despair and faith that he was already saved while still a sinner and while continuing

to be impure and unrighteous.⁴² Through his profound struggle in the monastery Luther had become convinced that there was no such thing in the life of man as freedom from sin, and that any theory of salvation which promised it was in error. He came to believe that salvation meant release from the wrath of God, and that while yet a sinner God had loved and forgiven him. He had completely inverted the process taught by medieval theology to be normal.

Consequently the righteous wrath of God stirred up against men because of their continued and sinful refusal to recognize divine love, became the factor that made sin move with such vital reality across Luther's theology. Luther suffered torments of anguish when he thought of the overwhelming wrath of a righteous God actively punishing him for sin which, in spite of himself, he was inevitably to commit. It was only when he gave up completely any hope of satisfying such an active justice, and began to think of God's righteousness as a passive forgiveness that justifies even the greatest sinner, that Luther found peace. Divine forgiveness had always been regarded as an important element in every medieval system of theology, but Luther for the first time put it in

⁴²Every historian of the period, and every theologian who is concerned at all with the history of the doctrines he expounds, has outlined Luther's theology. Many of these I have found helpful in clarifying my own understanding of Luther's position. However, in the section about to follow I am relying almost completely upon Arthur Cushman McGiffert (Protestant Thought before Kant [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911], pp. 20-30). There are other longer and more detailed statements that are far more complete, but I find McGiffert's both succinct and comprehensive.

the first place, both in importance and sequence. Divine forgiveness was to Luther, like its Author, complete and perfect, the opposite of the wrath before which he had trembled; it either forgave all sins, or left the sinner wholly at the mercy of the opposite quality of divinity.

The utter fearfulness of God's wrath was simply the absolute reaction of divinity from the natural depravity and total sinfulness of mankind. Consequently any doubt of the extent of human depravity, any lightening of the terrible weight of human guilt, any thought that there was any virtue whatsoever in man, was to belittle the magnitude of the divine grace required to overcome the towering divine wrath. At this point Luther broke cleanly with all humanist tendencies in the field of religion. Likewise he parted ways, at times violently, with the followers of Occam who claimed in any way that human merit or the operation of the human will was an element in salvation. Divine wrath was a precondition of divine grace, and divine wrath was directed against human sin; man's sin and God's wrath thus form the permanent backdrop for the drama of salvation.

In the face of man's total incompetence, it was the work of Christ that turned wrath toward forgiveness, and made man aware of God as anything other than a forbidding God of demanding justice. Apart from Christ there is only wrath and vengeance. All knowledge of God is "empty fancy and mere idolatry" outside of Christ; this is amply demonstrated in the experience of the prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament

who never knew God as interpreted by Christ. But Christ was more than a mere revelation to man: his life of perfect obedience imputed merit to the man who believed, and his suffering on the cross was an acceptance of the penalty of human sin. In full agreement with the orthodoxy of Anselm and Athanasius, Luther argued that only by possessing divine nature could the atonement of Christ partake of the infinite quality necessary for the redemption of mankind. Luther thus retains the traditional scheme of redemption as given classic formulation by Anselm four hundred years before, but gives it new prominence. Luther's interest, like that of Athanasius who had established the necessity for the divinity of Christ in the fourth century A.D., was primarily in the deity of Christ; "The words Trinity and Unity are mathematical words," he said, and "The expression Trinity is not in the Scriptures and sounds cold, and we shall do much better to speak of God and not of the Trinity."⁴³ The doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ were significant to Luther chiefly as they confirmed and guaranteed the forgiving love of God, and because he found this primary concern strengthened there he gave these ancient dogmas a reality that they had long since been lacking. It was in Christ, because he had shared the nature of human beings, that man might find the faith to trust in a God who could otherwise be known only as wrathful.

The faith of an individual man in the forgiving love

⁴³Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XII, p. 378.

of God in Christ became the power that set divine grace in action. That faith was not a complicated concept, but the simple trust of man in a God of love. Such faith would be impossible to the man who did not have a consciousness of sin, know himself to be under the divine wrath of God because of his corruptness, and feel the need of forgiveness. However, once that faith had been felt his salvation was complete; no necessity for working out his own salvation remained, for he was immediately and completely under the love and grace of God.

Luther's belief in predestination was also a practical consequence of his own experience. He had tried valiantly but vainly to earn peace with God, and when it had come it had sustained no relevance whatsoever to his own struggle. God had disclosed himself in his own way, and at his own pleasure; and salvation was completely dependent upon that disclosure.

But since Luther's conviction of predestination was of an existential sort, he was saved from the fierce and absolute determinism to which the force of sheer academic logic led Calvin. Luther frequently made dogmatic statements about the absolute bondage of the human will that rival Calvin's in their severity, but these were usually enunciated in the heat of controversy, and while Luther does say that all our deeds, evil as well as good, are directly motivated by God, he also recognized man's freedom in matters which do not concern salvation. Luther's notion of Christian Liberty is one of the most modern factors in all his thought, and is the

basis on which a philosophy of education finds space to stand. Calvin and most of medieval Christianity felt that the more unworldly and detached from the ordinary characteristics of the earth life could be made to be, the more Christian it was. Luther, however, brought the full power of his mind and the conviction of his wholesome enjoyment of this world to the assertion of the sacredness of this life and the holiness of all ordinary human occupations. He had had enough of asceticism and the rigors of medieval religious discipline, and he was determined that as a son of God, as Christ Himself had done, the Christian who was already justified by his faith would express the joy of his salvation by attending faithfully to his duties, maintaining a happy family life, and training his children in the Christian way. Though he often declared that even the Christian is weak and frail and cannot live as he ought to without the presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁴ Luther attributed a direct ethical power to faith. No one can give himself to the service of his neighbor who is anxious about the fate of his own soul. Furthermore, the good deeds of the Christian man can never be motivated by the pious hope that there will be eternal reward for his action for he is already assured of his salvation: "Whoever turns good works to his own advantage does no good work."⁴⁵

The sole source of this salvation-working faith, according to Luther, is the Word of God. The disclosure of the

⁴⁴Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. IV, pp. 68 ff.

⁴⁵Cited by McCiffert, op. cit., p. 35.

means of salvation is not made generally but specifically through the Word, which may be read in the Bible, may be communicated in conversation or preaching, or set forth in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. Wherever the Word is heard there may be faith and salvation, but only there, and it may be certain that wherever there is faith and salvation, the Word is there.

These are the positive elements of Luther's religious experience and his systematization of its elements. It is when the logical implications of these propositions are drawn in relationship to the practical religious situation, that the radical qualities begin to appear: a fundamental criticism of the Church, a demand for the alteration of the churchly view of the sacraments, a new view of the authority of Scripture, and a complete rejection of formal scholasticism.

Martin Luther had found the way to his own salvation quite outside the normal functions of the church; faith is a wholly personal matter, mediated by no one, and salvation is an individual not a corporate experience. At first Luther turned to the theory of Wycliffe and Huss which formed the basis for that later assumed by Calvin, that the true church is the totality of those predestined to salvation, and includes all the elect, born and unborn, living and dead, believers and unbelievers, angels as well as men. However, this sort of thought was wholly foreign to Luther's whole thought-system, and he soon began to teach that the church is the community of all true believers. Since all believers

are saved, it may be called the community of saints, the communio sanctorum of the Apostles' Creed. In distinction to the medieval church, which was composed of clergymen on one side and laymen on the other, Luther's church was a priesthood of all believers. Since believers were already saved by virtue of their faith, Luther could say with assurance that "outside the Church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation."⁴⁶ Because of his basic conception of salvation this statement cannot be taken to mean an exclusive ecclesiastical institution, but only that men are saved through the Word of God, which is present wherever believers are gathered together.

Not alone in the congregation may they find forgiveness of sins, but also in the house, in the field, in the garden; wherever one meets another there he may find comfort and rescue ... When I lay my troubles before my neighbor and ask him for comfort, whatever comfort he gives and promises me, that will God in heaven ratify.⁴⁷

Thus all believers are priests, both for themselves and for their brothers, and the Catholic concept of an institutionalized church is completely rejected.

An alteration of the churchly view of the sacraments was also dictated. The sacraments are raised to new dignity by the insistence that they are part of the language through which the saving Word of God may speak; but they are only language, only signs, and they have no efficacy in themselves.

⁴⁶Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. X, p. 162.

⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. XXVII, p. 108.

Later, under the pressure of radical interpretations of baptism and the communion, Luther began to insist that baptism was an actual channel for the bestowal of faith rather than a sign of its acceptance, and that the real body and flesh of Christ were present in the eucharist as proof of the forgiving love of God in Christ. The immediate effect of Luther's criticism of the sacramental view of the church was to reduce the seven traditional sacraments to the two which have remained characteristic of Protestantism, and to free the church service of the traditional mystery and superstition of the Latin mass.

Luther's interpretation of the Scriptures as one of the channels for the work of the Word of God, indicated that a new view of Biblical authority was necessary. It was in his study of Paul and the Psalms that Luther had found the gospel of God's forgiving love in Christ, but his faith and salvation had come to him quite apart from the Bible in his own direct apprehension of God. The Scriptures for Luther had their significant value as a guide to this saving faith, and therefore the Bible was one of the avenues through which the Word of God operated, but apart from being a contributory factor in his experience of salvation, the Scriptures had no real worth. It was common practice in that day to appeal to the authority of the Scripture in any conflict of opinion with the doctrine of the church, and Luther himself always debated religious issues with an armory of proof-texts. But Luther's distinction between the Bible and the Word of

God gave him a great deal of independence in his use of the Scripture. He did not hesitate to question the authenticity of a canonical book, to rely on one as more trustworthy than another, and to recognize mistakes and inaccuracies in both Old and New Testaments.⁴⁸ If the Epistle of James appeared to maintain the efficacy of good works, it was a "right strawy epistle." He declared the right of every Christian to test every doctrine for himself, and to believe in all matters as his experience of God's forgiving love suggested,⁴⁹ but he soon abandoned this position and doggedly took his stand in doctrine as narrow as that of the Catholics themselves.

In addition to declaring himself openly against the position of the Church, Luther's doctrine also meant that he was rejecting the religious implications of the scholasticism in which he had been trained. Religion was a thing of the heart, not of the intellect, in his experience, and in matters of belief the application of the intricate scholastic theology is outright blasphemy. Frankly discarding Aristotle, the patron saint of the schoolmen, Luther worked up a fresh combination of the Neo-Platonism of German mysticism and the theology of Paul. God is to be thought of as pure abstraction which cannot be wholly conceived by man, the complete negation of anything man can predicate of himself, be it consciousness, will or reason. There is no quality in man that

⁴⁸Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. VIII, p. 23; Vol. XLVI, p. 174.

⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. XXII, pp. 146 ff.

can rise to union with God, for God is immanent in the soul. This sort of reasoning is directly opposed to all that the scholastics stood for. Luther had also set himself against the educational system of which he had been a part since he had registered as a new student with the dean at Erfurt.

But Luther was no expert in church history, and he was thoroughly convinced that he was the first human being ever to achieve a right understanding of man's relationship to God. His conviction soon led him under the pressure of conflict and crisis to deny some of the most definitive insights his discoveries had provided him: the actual priesthood of all believers, the true liberty of the Christian man to interpret doctrine for himself. Crisis also had its beneficial effects, however; at first wholly distrustful of human reason and the necessity for education in religious matters, he was forced to attempt religious training for both laymen and ministers. To the end of his life he was firm in the belief that neither Augustine nor anyone else had preceded him in a clear understanding of Paul's phrase "The just are saved by faith."

* * * * *

The earliest traces of the cleavage between Martin Luther and the established authorities began to appear in 1516. During the year two papal bulls of indulgence were granted, one for work on the Church of St. Peter at Rome, and one for the completion of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. In the summer Luther preached a sermon on indulgences, a sermon full

of practical objections that did not venture into any of the phases of theology involved. At a disputation in September Luther proved rather conclusively from internal evidence that the chief authority of the Middle Ages for the doctrine of penance, a work on true and false repentance traditionally ascribed to Augustine, was not genuine. Luther's colleagues, especially Dr. Carlstadt, were greatly disturbed for the work had been widely used by medieval theologians, including Peter Lombard.⁵⁰

Also in September of 1516 Luther presided at a disputation in which Bartholomew Bernhardt, a master at Wittenberg and presumably a student of Luther's, defended theses "on the powers and will of man without grace," in which he argued that man was absolutely incapable of keeping the commandments of God by his own efforts, and charged the position of Gabriel Biel and other Occamists as stained with Pelagian heresy. Dr. Carlstadt and Professor Lupinus attacked the master's theses with vigor, and even Professor Nicholas von Amsdorf, an admirer of Luther, was at first surprised with the strength of Bernhardt's arguments. Dr. Carlstadt, however, left Wittenberg for Leipzig in January, 1517, to buy an edition of Augustine's works so that he might study the matter for himself.

Luther plunged into the task of converting the entire university to his rejection of scholasticism. On February 8,

⁵⁰Boehmer, op. cit., p. 126.

1517, he wrote to his friend John Lang at Erfurt:

I enclose a letter dear Father, for the excellent Truttvetter, containing propositions directed against logic, philosophy, and theology, i.e., slander and malediction of Aristotle, Porphyry, and the Sentences, the wretched studies of our age. The men who interpret them are bound to keep silence, but not for five years as the Pythagoreans did, but forever and ever, like the dead; they must believe all, obey always; nor may they ever, even for practice in argument, skirmish with their master, nor mutter a syllable against him. What will they not believe who have credited that ridiculous and injurious blasphemer, Aristotle? His propositions are so absurd that an ass or a stone would cry out at them ... My soul longs for nothing so ardently as to expose and publicly shame that Greek buffoon who like a spectre had befooled the Church ... If Aristotle had not lived in the flesh I should not hesitate to call him a devil. The greatest part of my cross is to be forced to see brothers with brilliant minds, born for useful studies, compelled to spend all their lives and waste their labor in these follies. The universities do not cease to condemn good books and publish bad ones, or rather talk in their sleep about those already published.⁵¹

The declaration of war had already been made in Wittenberg, and Luther was now ready to submit his radical notions to Erfurt for judgment.

Meanwhile Dr. Carlstadt had returned from Leipzig with his edition of Augustine, and had studied it enough to take a public stand for Luther's position. On April 26th he posted a set of one hundred and fifty-one bristling theses on the door of the castle church. On May 18 Luther wrote again to Lang from Wittenberg:

⁵¹Quoted by Moore (op. cit., pp. 483 f.).

Our theology and St Augustine prosper and reign here, by God's help. Aristotle is gradually tottering to a fall from which he will hardly rise again, and the lectures on the Sentences are wonderfully disrelished. No professor can hope for students unless he offers courses in the new theology, that is on the Bible or St. Augustine or some other ecclesiastical authority.⁵²

The educational reformation had been a short battle with a brilliant victory for the progressive party; within six months the curriculum and philosophy of the university had been completely overhauled.

On September 4 Dr. Luther presented a candidate for the Bible baccalaureate who defended ninety-nine theses that Luther himself had prepared. Franz Gunther of Nordhausen carried Martin Luther's trial case before the court of a Wittenberg disputation; the theses contained an almost complete outline of the "New Theology" in a negative and intentionally pointed form, for they set Augustine against Aristotle and religion against reason, they denounced Occam and his entire system, proclaimed a distrust of natural man and extolled grace. Luther had the theses printed and sent to Erfurt and Nuremberg, and asked a friend in Nuremberg to show them to the famous Dr. Eck of the University of Ingolstadt.⁵³ And then Dr. Martinus Lutherus, professor of sacred theology at the new and almost unknown university in Wittenberg, began to wait in eager anticipation for the reaction of the learned world to his daring theological discoveries.

⁵²Moore, op. cit., p. 484.

⁵³Cf. Fine, op. cit., p. 224; Boehmer, op. cit., p. 162.

But from the academic halls of Germany there came not the slightest echo of response.

CHAPTER VI

MAN OF THE HOUR

1. The Ninety-five Theses

For a man who had just written the first sentences of a new chapter in world history, Martin Luther could sleep peacefully and undisturbed on the night separating October from November in 1517. The hour was late when the Augustinian monk dried his quill, gathered up the sheets of paper he had been writing, and walked to the castle church of Wittenberg. There on the church door, in the usual place for posting propositions for academic discussion at Wittenberg University, he tacked up ninety-five theses regarding indulgences and their abuses. Protestantism usually dates its birth from that hour, but Doctor Luther had no premonition of the importance his act was to assume.

It was true that during the past two years his popularity had been growing in Wittenberg, but there had certainly been no indication that his opinions might interest the world beyond the sandy valley of the Elbe which had been the central scene of his work for a decade. John Oldecop recalled that in the spring of 1515 Luther already had "many auditors," and that he himself enjoyed the lectures because

he "put every Latin word into such stout German."¹ During the present year, as he had begun to denounce more clearly the failures of the church and to expound with enthusiasm his conviction that religion was not an easy affair of ritual but a really soul-shaking personal experience, his congregations at the parish church grew and students began to flock in from neighboring states to study under him at the university.² But only several weeks before he had sent out a complete outline of his theology to learned men in Germany, and had as yet heard not a word of reaction from them. And in 1514 Paul Lange had visited Wittenberg in his compilation of Trittenheim's Dictionary of Authors, and had overlooked Luther entirely. Furthermore the hard-working editor had uncovered several celebrities at Wittenberg, for his conception of a celebrity included anyone who might possibly in time become an important man, and he wrote into his notebook lists of the works such a man was only planning to write.³

It had been some weeks since Professor Luther had seen a memorandum, handsomely adorned with the arms of the

¹Heinrich Boehmer, Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 157.

²Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), Vol. I, p. 212.

³Boehmer, op. cit., p. 156. He adds: "If Dr. Martinus had been reckoned among the lights of the university, the conscientious and diligent Benedictine's attention would surely have fallen upon him. The fact that this was not done demonstrated that even in Wittenberg Luther was still an unknown quantity."

Archbishop of Mainz, giving "summary instructions to the sub-commissaries, penitentiaries and confessors" who were to effect the sale of a new issue of indulgences for Mainz.⁴ The Professor had already indicated his opinions concerning the viciousness of the general principle of indulgences, but this indulgence in the neighboring and rival state had promise of affecting the lives of men and women in Wittenberg. With amazement he had read of the attitude that the foremost prelate of Germany seemed to hold toward his duties as a pastor, and had actually written to His Excellency in an attempt to speak to the Archbishop's conscience. This, Luther had been confident, would certainly be sufficient.

The Archbishop, however, had given no indication that his episcopal conscience demanded any change in his current policies. So on the last night of October Martin Luther gathered together the results of several months of study and preaching in the form of the Theses, and after posting the broadsheet, he sent a copy to the Archbishop himself.⁵ Nowhere did Luther call into question a formal dogma of the church. Clothed in the pedantic dialectic of the Middle Ages, some of the propositions were purposely obscure, and not all were regarded by the author himself as certainly true; the subject had thus merely been proposed

⁴Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 340.

⁵Martin Luther, Works (Philadelphia: A. J. Melman Company, 1910-1932), Vol. I, pp. 25-26; letter to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, October 31, 1517.

for discussion.

The Wittenberg professor desired that he and his colleagues might debate the legitimacy of three central notions. The first concerned the theory of penance. Was it merely an outward exercise, or a matter between the individual and God? For example, the Thirty-sixth Thesis: "every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon."⁶ The second issue concerned the church, whether it consisted of an earthly institution openly divided into clergy and laymen, or of a fellowship of believers with the interests of all at heart. "He who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons," suggested Dr. Luther in Article Forty-five.⁷ "Christians are to be taught," he continued, "that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons."⁸ Finally, he proposed that open discussion be held on the entire matter of the financial interests of the Roman church. "The treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches," he observed, but "the treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men."⁹ "Why does not the pope," asked

⁶Luther, Works, Vol. I, p. 33.

⁷Loc. cit.

⁸Ibid., p. 34.

⁹Ibid., p. 35.

Luther in Article Seventy-one, "whose wealth is today greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter's with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"¹⁰

Luther had little cause to sleep lightly the night he made these propositions public. The Theses were but a corollary to the system that had been gradually unfolding before the students in his classes on the Epistle to the Romans for two years: the argument opened with a contrast between the life of repentance demanded by Christ and the ritualistic repentance demanded by the church, and proceeded to a contrast between the moral life required by the religion of Christ and the punishments exacted by the religion of the church. Suffering, he concluded here as in his lecturing before his classes, is the only means of entrance into heaven. It was reform rather than open revolution that Luther was hoping for. "He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons," he wrote in his Seventy-sixth Thesis, "let him be anathema and accursed."¹¹ The very selection of words seems to indicate that the writer confidently expected the Archbishop to reform the obvious abuses at which he aimed, if His Excellency but had them brought to his attention.

Curiously, it was not from the publicly posted copy

¹⁰Luther, Works, Vol. I, p. 37.

¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

of the Theses that the earth-shaking reaction came. In fact, it seems that no one in Wittenberg appeared for debate on the issue. It was the private copy sent to the Archbishop that raised the storm. The chief salesman of the Indulgence made immediate, vehement and public reply, giving much larger distribution to the Theses than any favorable publication could possibly have provided. The Archbishop of Mainz did not know quite what to make of the matter, so he stormed publicly, and endorsed the copy he had received and sent it with a covering letter to the commanding officer at Rome.¹² Wittenberg's rival university at Frankfort-on-Oder seized the event as an opportunity for cutting a crop of ecclesiastical favor, and promptly bestowed the degree of doctor of theology on Father Tetzel, a Dominican monk and the chief salesman of the indulgence, and the Dominicans gathered a huge crowd to celebrate the triumph over the Augustinian professor at Wittenberg. For his thesis on this occasion Tetzel defended a series of

¹¹Luther, Works, Vol. I, p. 36.

¹²Brian Lunn, Martin Luther, the Man and His God (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, Limited, 1934), pp. 70 f.: when Albrecht received Luther's letter and the copy of the Theses, he was "in consternation." He had "received a complaint from the Holy See that the sacrum negotium (holy business) was bearing far too heavy expenses through the 'pomp and pay of many persons.' So far from being able to pay off his debt to the Fuggers out of the receipts of the indulgences, it looked as though Albrecht would be out of pocket to the Holy See on the expenses account ... The only action of which he felt capable was to send Luther's letter and the Theses to Rome. Leo X said they were written by a drunken German who would come to his senses when he was sober."

propositions aimed directly at Luther, which the students of Wittenberg burned as soon as a copy reached them.

Startled and somewhat abashed by the rising furor, Martin Luther wrote to his trusted friend and teacher John von Staupitz. He enclosed a copy of the Theses and wrote reticently of his action. "I now regretfully come out in public. For I have ever been a lover of my corner, and prefer to look upon the beauteous, passing show of the great minds of our age, rather than to be looked upon and laughed at. But I see," he sighed, "that the bean must appear among the cabbages."¹³ Continuing his apology, he confided:

Unable to meet their rage half-way, I determined to enter a modest protest, and to call their teaching into question, relying on the opinion of all the doctors of the whole church ... I brought upon my head all the curses, high, low and middle, which those lovers of money (I should say of 'souls') are able to send or to have sent against me.¹⁴

Informed that the pope had received complaints of his revolutionary action, Luther wrote to the pontiff explaining his position. Excerpts from this letter show how profoundly he had been shaken by the publicity he had received:

I am called six hundred names of ignominy ... My ears shudder and my eyes are astounded. . . .¹⁵

¹³Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. I, p. 42.

¹⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 44.

At last, since I could do nothing else, it seemed good that I should offer at least a gentle resistance to them, i.e., question and discuss their teachings ... Therefore, I published a set of theses, inviting only the more learned to dispute with me if they wished; as should be evident, even to my adversaries, from the Preface to the Disputation.¹⁶

But necessity compels me to be the goose that squawks among the swans.¹⁷

But what Martin Luther thought was a routine and conservative objection to a technical point of hierarchical policy, actually touched a cord in common men's hearts already drawn taut by long ecclesiastical malpractice. The tension with the people was not a doctrinal one; it was primarily economic. The theological position to which Luther had battled his way was beginning to erupt into significant practical implications, and before a decade had passed political, social and educational institutions were to come under its withering criticism.

2. Indulgences

At that moment the church possessed about one-third of the land in Germany, and took a very high tax in kind on the land it did not own outright. Yet this enormous burden upon the national income might have been borne in patience had not the clergy and members of convents lived a largely

¹⁶Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. I, p. 46.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

parasitic existence. Agricola was probably exaggerating when he put the number of monks and nuns in Germany at nearly a million and a half, but it is quite certainly established that the city of Worms with its seven thousand inhabitants supported fifteen hundred ecclesiastics, and that little Gotha, a town of a thousand people, supported a hundred clergymen. At the Minster in Strassburg well over a hundred clerics were employed. More than a million people, at least, were mass stipendiaries who did nothing but read masses, and convent inmates who knew no other work than singing and praying.¹⁸ Luther recalled in later years a priest he had known who found time so burdensome that instead of reciting his breviary he would run over the alphabet and say: "O my God, take this alphabet and put it together how You will."¹⁹ The condition of the monasteries was such a public scandal that jokes at the expense of the monks were freely circulated. Later Luther remembered that when Wolsey, who was the son of a butcher, was made cardinal, one merry fellow revived an old joke to fit the occasion: "Please God he come to be pope, for then we shall have meat on fast-days. St. Peter, because he was a fisherman, prohibited meat in order to raise the price of fish; this butcher's son will do the same for fish."²⁰

¹⁸Heinrich Boehmer, Luther and the Reformation in the Light of Recent Research (New York: The Christian Herald, 1930), p. 316.

¹⁹William Hazlitt, The Table Talk of Martin Luther (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), #DCCCXCIX, p. 366.

²⁰Ibid., #CCCCXLII, p. 199.

As a result of its teaching that poverty was a merit and begging a respectable profession, the church managed to shift another tremendous economic burden to the shoulders of the common man. Eberlin von Grunzberg may grossly overstate the case when he says that in Germany only one person out of fifteen worked,²¹ but there was a host of beggars, vagrants and itinerant students protected and encouraged by the doctrines of the church, so large that idleness was a national disease and threatened to become a cause of economic crisis. Even the life of the self-supporting minority was invaded by the encouragement of the church to idleness. There were dozens of church holidays every year, long pilgrimages were considered almost a necessity for salvation, long fasts gnawed at the strength. In his Treatise on Good Works Luther later struck out at the foolish women who "cling so firmly to their fasting that they run the risk of great danger to the fruit of the womb and to themselves, rather than not to fast when others fast."²² Such folly was especially ironic to Luther, who knew how some of the monks fasted. "The fasting of the monks is more easy to them than our eating to us," he said,

For one day of fasting there are three of feasting. Every friar for his supper has two quarts of beer, a quart of wine, and spice-cakes or bread prepared with spice and salt, the better to relish the drink. Thus go on these poor, fasting brethren;

²¹Boehmer, Luther, p. 316.

²²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. I, p. 245.

getting so pale and wan, they are like the fiery angels.²³

Within months of the Eve of All Hallows when Luther's Theses fluttered unnoticed on the chapel door in the crisp fall air, the scene in many parts of Germany had changed. Mendicancy was no longer looked upon as an honest livelihood, poverty and casual almsgiving as a merit for salvation, and the municipal police were freed from the medieval ecclesiastical laws protecting vagrants and able-bodied beggars. Hundreds of convents disappeared, and thousands of nuns and monks found themselves forced to live by the work of their own hands. In many areas an end had come to the golden age of unlimited idleness for the work-shy tribe of religious and student wanderers, and a new economic order had been introduced. People had begun to draw the dynamic implications of the New Theology Martin Luther had worked out in the lecture halls of Wittenberg.

The specific matter that called forth the Ninety-five Theses was the new indulgence granted for the district of Mainz, and it began in turn with the appointment of Prince Margrave Albrecht von Brandenburg as archbishop of Magdeburg on August 30, 1513. It was not altogether unusual for a political prince to be made a prince of the church before having received ecclesiastical orders. Within a few weeks, however, Albrecht was made bishop of Halberstadt, and there

²³Luther, Table Talk (Hazlitt), CCCCCLXXXIII, p. 212.

was definite canonical law prohibiting the union of two bishoprics in the hands of one person. Moreover, Albrecht was only twenty-three years old, an age considerably less than that required by law. Albrecht thus obviously stood in need of a double dispensation from the pope. Leo X, however, made no difficulties. On December 13, 1513, the young prince was confirmed archbishop-bishop, and in return the pope received a fee of one thousand and seventy-nine ducats from Brandenburg.

In return for certain commercial favors, Albrecht had been able to secure this amount of cash through the services of the greatest banking house in Germany, the House of Fugger. But the Fuggers and Albrecht had scarcely settled this piece of business when there opened to the fortunate young Hohenzollern prince the prospect of a third bishopric. On March 9, 1514 he was elected archbishop of Mainz, "clearly by divine inspiration" as the court at Berlin hastened to maintain.

The Roman Curia resisted this latest addition to the ecclesiastical halo of the youthful prince, but at last it allowed itself to be persuaded, once more by a brilliant business offer. Albrecht approached the pope with a "composition fee" of ten thousand ducats in addition to the legal fee of twelve thousand for confirmation as archbishop of Mainz, if the pontiff would confirm him in all three offices. The pope soon agreed in principle to this proposition. The amount of the composition fee, however, was not so easily

settled as the principle of the matter. The Curia demanded fifteen thousand ducats, then twelve, for twelve was the number of the Apostles. Albrecht's agent remarked that there were seven cardinal sins, and the solid commercial figure of ten thousand was agreed to.

In order to strengthen the young prelate's ability to pay, which was not altogether free from doubt, Leo offered him a jubilee indulgence celebrating the foundation of the Archbishopric of Mainz, on condition that he hand over half of the proceeds to Rome. On August 18, 1514, Albrecht was confirmed as archbishop of Mainz and Marburg, and as bishop of Halberstadt. On March 21, 1516, a respectable period having elapsed, the pope announced a plenary indulgence for eight years. The proceeds, it was publicly proclaimed with a flurry of righteous enthusiasm, was to go entirely to the construction of the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, but secretly it was clearly understood that one-half was to belong to Albrecht, for he had heavy obligations to the ever ready Fuggers.²⁴ The Curia had reason to be satisfied: it had gained immediate cash profits of 23,379 ducats, plus one-half of the indulgence. All other indulgences in the district were suspended in favor of the new undertaking, one of the least of the precedents to be broken in the agreement.

The sale of indulgences itself was an example both

²⁴Cf. Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 60; Boehmer, Luther, pp. 100 ff.

of the perversion that many ecclesiastical principles had suffered during the Middle Ages and of the kind of thing that inevitably fell under the criticism of Luther's New Theology. Centuries before, the church had proclaimed the lost condition of all men, and had come to the practical principle that in order to reenter the fold the sinner must indicate his repentance by some mark of unusual devotion. At first a public confession was the accepted practice, but during the medieval period the custom of private confession became widespread. Of course it was not long before it became common knowledge that certain priests were more lenient than others in their assignment of the marks of repentance, and these became the popular confessors. The next step was obviously to set up specific penances for specific sins so that there would be uniformity among all confessors. From the thirteenth century it became the special province of the pope to change any of these accepted requirements, or to hear appeals in any specific cases. Then the theologians of this century which marked the high point of the political strength of the medieval church began to point out the absolute superiority of the church in the spiritual realm; it possessed an inexhaustible treasury of the merits of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and of this infinite spiritual capital the pope could allot pardon to men as they needed it. Special services to the church by a monastery or a city could earn a papal grant of special forgiveness for its members. The first general indulgence was offered to

everyone who would go on the first Crusade to the Holy Land in 1095, later men were promised remission of sins for crusades of less certain spiritual importance, and at last, from paying specified sums for financing crusades it was not a far step to giving favors for helping finance buildings or personal ambitions.²⁵ During the later Middle Ages the practice became openly flagrant: for taking a false oath in a criminal case, nine shillings would provide forgiveness; for murdering a layman seven shillings was the price, but for laying violent hands on a clergyman ten shillings was required for freedom from the sin; for robbing or burning a neighbor's house the ante rose to twelve.²⁶ The practice of the late fifteenth century was far from that of the fourth, or the theory of the twelfth: for a price a man could buy a clear conscience from an institution that mediated for pay between men and the Savior rather than urging them to seek forgiveness for their sins from God through Christ. Luther's theory of salvation implied a complete rejection of the current theory and practice of penance.

With the pressure of the Fuggers on his treasury, and more than likely the presence of their agents in his council chambers, Albrecht organized and launched his campaign to achieve financial liquidation. Father Tetzel was appointed

²⁵ Fedoslav A. Tsanoff, The Moral Ideals of Our Civilization (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1942), pp. 105 ff.

²⁶ Anonymous, Sketches of the Life of Philip Melancthon (Hartford: D. F. Robinson and Company, 1830), pp. 81 f.

master salesman, and he conducted his bargain sale with a flourish of trumpets. The campaign even boasted a slogan:

Sobald das Geld im Kasten klingt,
Die Seele aus dem Purgfeuer springt.²⁷

"The moment the money rattles into the box," chanted the agents, "the soul escapes from purgatory." A full and complete absolution for all sins was promised, and plenary indulgence for the souls of relatives and friends who have passed away, who would forthwith be released from purgatory with the receipt of a proper sum. The faithful were urged to acquire a stock of indulgences not only to cover their past sins, but such sins as they might commit in the future. "If a man were to violate the Blessed Virgin herself," purred Tetzl, "he would obtain absolute pardon through the Holy Father's indulgence."²⁸ The formal instructions added that the buyer was to have a contrite heart, but as the campaign mounted the indulgences were handed over for ready money, and no questions that might prove embarrassing were asked. A public advertisement of the indulgence proclaimed:

The first grace is a plenary remission of all sins, than which one might say no grace could be greater, because a sinner deprived of grace through it achieves perfect remission of sin and the grace of God anew. By which grace ... the pains of purgatory are wiped out ... The second grace for sale is a confessional letter allowing the penitent to choose his own confessor; the third is the participation in the merits of the saints. The fourth

²⁷Fife, op. cit., p. 61.

²⁸Lunn, op. cit., p. 65.

grace is for the souls in purgatory, a plenary remission for all sins ... Nor is it necessary for those who contribute to the fund for the purpose to be contrite nor to confess.²⁹

Tetzel boasted up and down the land that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching. "For twelve pence," he said, "you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory; and are you so ungrateful that you will not rescue your parent from torment?" The sales talk was unanswerable for anyone who accepted the teaching and theology of the church: "If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly and sell it, in order to purchase such benefits."³⁰

In every town along the route of sales, the arrival of the indulgence preachers was the sign for a general holiday. They were met with processions and bell-ringing. The indulgence was banned in Saxony, but Wittenberg was near the Mainz border town of Juterbog, and when Tetzel came to Juterbog Luther's parishioners flocked to him, taking their galden in their hands. This drain of money from the parish was serious enough, but there were even more disturbing results when the absolved sinners returned. Now they were empowered to choose their own confessor, to refuse to go to their parish priest; and when Luther threatened them with punishment

²⁹Preserved Smith, *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1911), p. 39.

³⁰Anonymous, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

they waved the papal indulgence in his face. The prestige of the church at Wittenberg and the New Theology suffered, and Luther regarded the entire matter as a revolutionary one. "I ask myself," he said in a sermon in 1518,

How God can absolve sinners before they have given proof of repentance for their sins, and if they prove and make manifest their repentance, I ask myself how God can fail to absolve them even without indulgences. I don't understand it at all.³¹

The whole affair stood in direct contradiction of Luther's hard won view of salvation in which faith and free divine grace were the essential factors, and Luther's objection not only threatened the theological foundations of the church's power over men but gave expression to a complaint near to the heart of the common people. The combination was explosive.

3. Reformation Breaks

Now suddenly everything was transformed. Events tumbled over each other in their eagerness to happen. The professor of Wittenberg could no longer lose his identity in the little lecture halls of a small university located in an unimportant town. The world seemed to be breaking into flame about him, and more and more frequently he found himself accused of arson. Tetzel inveighed against him and challenged him to open debate. The rival Dominicans complained of the

³¹Life, op. cit., p. 63.

Augustinians to the pope. His Holiness issued a citation in June of 1518 to Luther to appear in Rome. The professor's obscurity was gone; both people and the pope had taken notice of him. He went to Augsburg in October of 1518 to meet the papal legate, Cardinal Cajetan. He himself said that if Cajetan had treated him mildly he would have done everything to make peace with Rome, and at their first meeting the professor fell humbly at the Cardinal's feet. But instead of discussing the matter, he was commanded at once to retract. On October 20th he fled from Augsburg, not knowing that two months before an order had gone out from Rome that he should be arrested as a heretic. In June and July of 1519 Luther appeared at Leipzig to debate the issues with Johann Eck, and Eck's great skill with dislectic drove him to the admission that in condemning John Huss the famous Council of Constance had erred, and Eck departed at once for Rome to secure Luther's condemnation. Leo had his own political reasons for keeping on good terms with the Elector Frederick of Saxony, who had meanwhile become Luther's patron, and postponed action for some time, but on June 15, 1520, he issued the bull Exsurge Domine excommunicating Luther, and Luther's works were burned in the Piazza Navona at Rome.³²

It did not often happen in those authoritarian days that official condemnation resulted in popular acclaim, but such was the result in the case of Martin Luther: a thousand

³²E. Elliott Binns, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Medieval Papacy (London: Methuen and Company, Limited, 1934), p. 337.

years had been drawing taut the tensions that Luther released. The system of medieval faith, scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical administration that the church had built for itself had approached a thoroughness too complete for prolonged endurance. The mind and spirit of man are essentially free, and sooner or later they will burst through any system of uniformity of thought and religion. The stronger the system is made the more violent will be the inevitable eruption. The Reformation was the revolt of the modern spirit against the superstitious, ascetic, other-worldly ideal of religion that the medieval church had sought to impose upon men in violation of their natural spiritual freedom.

Externally, of course, there was a great deal about the medieval church for men to admire. When Martin Luther first caught sight of Rome, its soil "sacred with martyr blood," he fell on his knees; but when he toured the city he discovered impiety and wickedness, the existence of which only the evidence of his own eyes would have convinced him. Luther's experience is significant because it was precisely duplicated by increasing numbers of men from northern Europe in Luther's generation. The French military expedition into Italy in 1496 probably first opened the eyes of large numbers of men from Europe to the actual conditions of the church and Rome. As the trade routes grew smoother and safer, thousands more swarmed into Italy. German artists who went to Italy for study would not remain silent when they came home, and the humanists spread the knowledge of the condition of

the church about northern Europe. Pilgrims told strange stories, and the multitudes who inundated Rome during the Jubilee Year of 1500 complained all over Europe of the stench of corpses hanging from the Bridge of St. Angelo.³³

There was a growing tendency to consider the popes but little more than minor Italian princes, and indeed their own behavior was such as to lead men to the conclusion that such was their own appraisal of the office. Leo X never understood Luther, and died in the belief that Luther was moved by jealousy because a rival monastic order had gained the commissions from the sale of the indulgence. But the career of Leo X was exactly the kind of thing that led people in northern Europe to disregard papal leadership and even think of it as definitely harmful.

In the year that Martin Luther was born, Lorenzo de' Medici received notice from the king of France that his seven year old son Giovanni had been appointed prior of the Abbey of Fonte-dolce by royal decree. Five weeks later Messer Giovanni was appointed archbishop of Aix, though the action proved to be somewhat premature, not because Giovanni was found to be too young for the post, but because the present archbishop was found not to be dead yet. In the spring of 1484 the abbot of Passignano died, and Archbishop Giovanni was put in the vacant place.³⁴ With such a noble beginning

³³Binns, op. cit., p. 343.

³⁴William Roscoe, The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth (London: Henry C. Bohn, 1846), Vol. I, pp. 10 f.

made for an ecclesiastical career for his son, Lorenzo had Giovanni given the tonsure and arranged for the marriage of his own daughter Maddalena to Francesco Cibo, one of the pre-pontifical children of Innocent VIII, then pope.³⁵ In 1488 Lorenzo began begging Innocent VIII to make young Giovanni a cardinal. It was a matter that required some persuasion, for Innocent had solemnly promised at his election not to raise anyone to the dignity of the College who was under thirty years of age, but when Giovanni had reached the age of thirteen he was named cardinal, with the stipulation that he would not assume the insignia of his office for three years and should spend the interim in study. Giovanni was sent to the University of Pisa, and after three years set off for Rome and his great office, carrying with him a letter of counsel and advice from his father.

I well know that, as you are now to reside at Rome, that sink of all iniquity, the difficulty of conducting yourself by these admonitions will be increased. The influence of example is prevalent; but you will probably meet with those who will particularly endeavor to corrupt and incite you to vice.³⁶

The young cardinal was consecrated to his office with all due dignity, and thus having received a portion of the apostolic powers, immediately tried their efficacy by bestowing an indulgence upon all those who had attended the ceremony, and on

³⁵William Roscoe, *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1845), pp. 297 f.

³⁶Roscoe, *Leo the Tenth*, Vol. I, p. 23.

all who should, at the anniversary of the day, visit the altar where the ceremony had taken place.³⁷ In 1513 Giovanni, no longer an innocent boy, became Pope Leo X, in the line of the Borgias and Medicis, who "enjoyed the papacy." Leo was a lavish enjoyer, and he enjoyed himself to the limit of the papal treasury; cards and bounties are said to have cost him six thousand ducats monthly, and though he received seven times that much from the regular sale of ecclesiastical offices, he was deeply in debt.³⁸ Money was one of the necessities of his life, and for the capital investment involved, the sale of papal indulgences was a tremendously successful business venture.

The undermining of the moral basis of the papacy was a familiar fact in Italy, but its discovery came as a shock to northern Europe. Though they were far from sinless

³⁷Roscoe, Leo the Tenth, Vol. I, p. 25. It seems that Giovanni was at the same time a canon of the cathedral of Florence, of Piesole, and of Arezzo in Rome; rector of Carmignano, of Giogoli, of St. Casciani, of St. Giovanni in Valdarno, of St. Piero at Casale, and of St. Marcellino posto of Prato; abbot of Monte Casino, of St. Giovanni of Passignano, of St. Maria of Mirimondo, of St. Martino of Pontedolce in France, of St. Lorenzo of Coltibuono, of St. Salvatore at Vajano, of St. Bartolommeo at Anghiari, of St. Maria at Monte Piano, of St. Girolamo at Tours, of St. Giusto and St. Clement at Volterra, of St. Stephano of Bologna, of St. Michele in Arezzo, of Chiaravalle at Milan, of the diocese of Pini in Pittavia and of the Casa Dei at Chieramonte; and in 1510 he became archbishop of Amalfi. "Bone Deus," exclaimed the good Fabroni, "quot in uno jeuvene culmate sacerdotia!" There is also little wonder that as Leo X he could be persuaded to let Albrecht have a pair of paltry bishoprics and also be an archbishop.

³⁸Tsanoff, op. cit., p. 106.

themselves, Germans took moral matters seriously, and they had been recently sobered by the outbreak of a terrible new disease, syphilis.³⁹ They were traditionally respectful of religious matters, to the point of superstition at times, perhaps, and they expected more than average dignity in the behavior of men in high offices. Germany was beginning to see enough, and her once unquestioning respect for the church was beginning to falter; she was ready for a crusader.

4. Man of the Hour

In May of 1520 Martin Luther issued his Treatise on Good Works, asserting vigorously that natural human life was a better field for service of God than the unnatural limitations of ascetism. By August of that year Luther had been informed unofficially of the papal excommunication, yet he had not been formally notified. In this state of being and not being, he wrote An Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. As Luther wrote he knew that he was literally fighting for his life as well as for his New Theology. The whole course of the controversy had shocked his moral sense; instead of discussion or any attempt to reform the obvious abuses, the sole endeavor had been to silence him at any cost. No officials of the church seemed to care for ordinary morality or decency as he was defending it. Not

³⁹Binns, op. cit., pp. 343 f.

only was he condemned unheard, but Eck, his bitter enemy, was made his judge and executioner. In twenty-five paragraphs Luther scourged the pride and avarice of the pope,⁴⁰ the simony and pluralism rife among the princes of the church,⁴¹ the lavishness of the papal court,⁴² with its burden of unoccupied officials all waiting for fat benefices to fall vacant.⁴³ He attacked the extortionate practice of annates,⁴⁴ favoritism in the bestowal of church offices,⁴⁵ the trade in the gift of the episcopal pallia.⁴⁶ He complained of the business methods of the papal court.⁴⁷

Having committed himself to this extent, Luther brought his hitherto unexploited big guns of vigorous rhetoric to bear upon the social and economic abuses of the church with which he had become familiar in recent years. He insisted on sweeping social changes: all relations with the pope, financial, feudal and forensic, should cease;⁴⁸ there should be no more pilgrimages to Rome, except under carefully guarded conditions,⁴⁹ or to out of the way shrines, which

⁴⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 76.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 78.

⁴²Ibid., p. 80.

⁴³Ibid., p. 81.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 97 f.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 99-112.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 113.

should be razed to the ground;⁵⁰ the number of festivals should be reduced to Sunday and a few great feasts;⁵¹ no more houses should be built by the mendicant orders,⁵² existing mendicants should be massed together in ten or more houses where they could be kept without begging.

This pamphlet of Luther's soon ran the breadth of the empire; in some real way he had apparently voiced what most men had long been thinking, but had never dared to put into words. One wonders whether the Christian nobility of Luther himself understood the revolutionary significance of what he had written. The peasants did, however, and acclaimed Martin Luther as their new hero and leader. The German people were at last in deadly earnest. Their religious needs had long been unsatisfied, and here appeared to be a man who spoke their own language more daringly than could they themselves.⁵³ In Italy the organized church could observe Leo's own maxim as a recognized part of the game of politics: "When you have made league with one party you should keep in constant negotiation with the other."⁵⁴ But in Germany this attitude made

⁵⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 129.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 127.

⁵²Ibid., p. 116.

⁵³James Mackinnon (Luther and the Reformation [London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925], Vol. II, p. 337) is very insistent that the Reformation was actually the "revival of the Pauline type of religious thought and experience," and discounts the nationalistic elements in the revolt.

⁵⁴Binns, op. cit., p. 349.

the church incapable of dealing with the aroused and serious German people; for them this was no game. To the German sin was "something ineradically ingrained ... and never to be removed by any piecemeal operations such as might suit the Latin,"⁵⁵ an attitude that had been intensified during the bitter experience of the contemporary generation. Luther suddenly found himself the spokesman of the German people.

As the storm of approval grew more audible and the wholehearted support of the Prince of Saxony became apparent, Luther felt more secure and gathered his forensic powers for an even stronger attack upon the church. In October he released The Babylonish Captivity of the Christian Church, in which he unsparingly attacked actual Roman doctrines. There were only two sacraments which found scriptural basis, he said, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The others, as well as monastic vows, pilgrimages and works of merit, were all man-made errors.⁵⁶

In December, while the papal bull was being published in Germany, he published his almost lyrical Treatise on Christian Liberty, addressed primarily to the common man of Germany. "That I may make the way easier for the unlearned,"⁵⁷ he proposed two theses to show that the religious life was entirely subjective, and was not to be controlled or

⁵⁵Binns, op. cit., p. 345.

⁵⁶Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, pp. 134 ff.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 312.

administered by an institutional authority: "A Christian man is a most free lord of all things and subject to no one"; he is also "a most dutiful servant of all things and subject to everyone."⁵⁸ "By faith he is free from all and in perfect freedom does gratuitously all that he does." And gratitude to the Father for these inestimable gifts of freedom and salvation impels him "freely, gladly, and with a whole heart and eager devotion," to "do all that will be pleasing and acceptable in His sight."⁵⁹ So the Christian man vows, "I will therefore give myself as a sort of Christ to my neighbor, as Christ has given himself for me."⁶⁰

By this rule it behoves us to pour out upon each other, to make common each unto the other, the goods which we have received, and that every man clothe himself with his neighbor's estate, and apply himself to his neighbor's necessities, even as if we were in like necessity ourselves.⁶¹

"A Christian man, Luther concluded in this almost poetic statement of the practical ethic of the New Theology, "does not live in himself but in Christ and in his neighbor; to be a Christian man is to dwell in Christ by faith and in his neighbor by love."⁶²

The more subtle implications of the theology that Martin Luther had worked out might well have passed Germany

⁵⁸Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 312.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 337.

⁶⁰Loc. cit.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 338.

⁶²Ibid., p. 342.

by with no more than a mild stirring of academic interest had not the vivid emotion of these three great Reformation documents been released in all their flood tide of passion upon the German people. This was the miner's son who held conversations with the devil and knew the awful immanence of God, who though he had become a professor of theology and had read and lectured upon Aristotle, still spoke the language of the people by lashing out at the common abuses of the church and telling the people that neighborly love was the manifestation of the man who had loved God. His simple, direct language often resounded with the coarsest of the expressions with which common men were familiar, and it delighted their peasant hearts to hear the stream of argument and invective, never couched in anything less than superlatives, directed at the common enemy of all common people, the men in positions of luxury and authority. Luther's greatest personal weakness, later to become ominously determinant in almost everything he was to do, was one of the most important factors in his early strength. His basic assumption was that God's grace was everything, and that man's will was nothing. He possessed an intense conviction that his new belief was directly inspired. The simple corollary was that all who opposed him were opposing the divine will. Nerved with this certainty he attacked with naive aplomb the mightiest powers of his day and brought about a transformation in the soul of half of Europe. His defiance of the papal

authorities combined with his common appearance and average background to make him a public idol. Amid a crowd of cheering students under an oak tree outside of Wittenberg, Luther burned the papal bull on November 15, 1520. In the spring of 1521 he was summoned to appear before the emperor and the Reichstag. His journey to the trial amounted to a popular ovation, and he preached in nearly every village along the route. He arrived at Worms amid the plaudits of a huge crowd which accompanied him to his lodgings. On April 8th, 1521, when the professor of Wittenberg stood before the emperor and amid the glitter of the Reichstag, excommunicated by the pope and banned by the empire, said stoutly, "Ich kann nicht andere, hier steh' ich. Gott helfe mir," he was the idol of all Germany - the man of the hour.⁶³

⁶³The speech seems actually to have been: "since therefore, your majesty and your lordships desire a simple answer, I will give you one straight to the point and without intentional offence. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by an evident reason - for I confide neither in the pope nor a Council alone, since it is certain that they have often erred and contradicted themselves - I am held fast by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word, and I neither can nor will revoke anything, seeing that it is not safe or right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen."

The declaration was probably made in Latin, for the emperor and others of the assembled court could not understand German. Further, the usual version of the final words such as I have given them above are found in an account printed shortly afterwards at Wittenberg, and are evidently an amplification of the words actually spoken by Luther on that occasion. The German translation of the speech also only contains the words "God help me. Amen." However, the traditional and inaccurate report of the words is probably not only completely in accordance with Luther's intention, but is the way the German people heard them and treasured them. In this context, therefore, I feel that it may be proper to use them.

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CHAPTER VII

ENTER HUMANISM

1. Philip Melancthon

On August 25, 1518,¹ the new professor of Greek arrived at the University of Wittenberg. The appointment of an instructor in language to the staff was an unusually progressive move among German universities during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and the decision had been the direct result of Martin Luther's new conviction of the urgent necessity for a general knowledge of the mother tongue of the New Testament.

Wittenberg was disappointed at first in its new professor. He was only twenty-one years old, and looked younger. He was small, hesitating in both speech and actions, and carried one shoulder higher than the other.² He had been invited

¹Charles Leander Hill (*The Loci Communes of Philip Melancthon* [Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1944], p. 23) places the arrival one year later. This is possibly a printing error, for there is practical unanimity among other authorities for the earlier date.

²Karl von Raumer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik* (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1877), p. 105; Philip Schaff, *St. Augustin, Melancthon, Neander: Three Biographies* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1886), p. 111; James William Richard, *Philip Melancthon, the Protestant Preceptor of Germany* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), pp. 36, 112. In the latter place

to Wittenberg as a specialist in Greek, and like all real language scholars of the time, he was a humanist. Even as a boy he had displayed a genius for mastering difficult languages, but like most child prodigies he remained almost psychopathically dependent upon the influences and teachers of his younger years, and was never a great original spirit. Differing profoundly from Luther in background and temperament, he was the only humanist with whom the Reformer ever came to terms. His mission to Wittenberg was to teach Greek, but he became an integral part of the Reformation, influencing its theology toward moderation, and when the time of crisis came and the practical necessity of providing for the next generation of the Reformation became vividly apparent, it was he who organized an educational system of narrow pedantism and unproductive classicism that rendered the evangelical movement of Germany sterile for three centuries. The system of schools that he set up exerted a tremendous influence upon Germany, but the fire for personal salvation, the impassioned defense of the right of the individual Christian not merely to read the Scriptures but also to interpret the Word of God for himself, the flame and emotion that created the early Reformation were gone and the world waited for three centuries

Richard, who had written the only reliable full length biography of Melancthon in English, cites John Kessler, later a Swiss reformer, who wrote in part, in 1523: "In size he is a small, unattractive person. You would think he was only a boy not above eighteen years, when he walks by the side of Luther ... One wonders that in so small a body there can lie concealed such a great and lofty mountain of wisdom and culture."

and a New World to find an opportunity to put the educational implications of the Reformation into practice. For his tremendous effort, misguided through no fault of his own, he was called the Preceptor of Germany. Like many other men whose stories are told in the pages of history, he was a victim of his age. Had he lived at a different time, not only his own life but perhaps the Reformation itself might have been very different.

He was Phillipus Melancthon.

A. The Inaugural Address

Four days after his arrival in Wittenberg the faculty and students of the university met in solemn and colorful convocation to hear the inaugural address of the youth who was to teach Greek. The address was to be entitled De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis, and they were critically eager to hear what he might have to say about "the improvement of the studies of youth."

From the opening words the new professor gave evidence of the classic culture and mastery of words for which he had already become famous.³ Only a deep regard for the proper studies and the duties of my office, he began, for the illustrious Rector and Deans of the University, could induce me to commend to you the study of classical literature, which is so

³Philippi Melanthonis, Opera: Corpus Reformatorum (Halis [Saxonem] and Brunswig: C. A. Schaetschke, 1834-1860), Vol. XI, pp. 15-26.

opposed by rude and uncultured man. "The study of the restored classical literature," they say, "with great labor yields but small profit. Idle men have betaken themselves to Greek in order to make a vain boast of their knowledge; the Hebrew promises but little with the moderns; all true studies have fallen away and philosophy is utterly neglected." These are the accusations of those who are annoyed by the innovation of teaching Greek, some of whom I see before me. But hear me patiently as my relation to you and the dignity of literature require.

Melanchthon then plunged into a brilliant historical review of the educational movements which had led to the necessity for reinstating Greek among the studies of the university curriculum in fifteenth century Germany. He paraded great events before the Wittenberg convocation: Greek and Roman literature fell with Rome herself, and for centuries only in England and Ireland did learning flourish. He pictured the attempt of the Englishman Alcuin under Charlemagne to teach the Germans some literature to soften their knowledge of war, the brief rise of Paris as a center of culture, and the return to uncultured darkness. Then came a "race of scholastics, more numerous than the seed of Cadmus," who planted themselves on Aristotle, hard enough to understand even for the Greeks, but absolutely unintelligible in the inadequate scholastic Latin translations, and "Greek was forgotten, a jargon of useless learning forced upon the mind, and the classics thrown aside altogether." Melanchthon recalled that he himself had spent six long years of his

twenty-one under these "pseudo-Aristotlean sophists," one of whom taught him that "one thing only did he know, namely, that he knew nothing," while the sophists actually "knew everything, save this one, namely, that they did not know anything."

Law, medicine and theology alike suffered from this decline of classical study, and real piety was exchanged for ceremonies, human traditions, constitutions, capitularies, pilgrimages and glosses. The great confusion among the philosophers over nominalism and realism, and the endless disputes between the modern and the ancient schools of theology could be made to yield only to a thorough study of the philosophers, orators, poets, theologians and historians of antiquity. Homer is the source of all learning among the Greeks, and Virgil and Horace among the Latins. Theology must be studied by the aid by the Greek and Hebrew. "When we go to the sources," he said in conclusion, "then we are led to Christ. I shall begin my work with Homer and the Epistle to Titus. Cultivate the old Latins and embrace the Greeks. To the inculcation of such studies I now devote myself."

August 29, 1518, the date of Melancthon's inaugural address, is an important though often unmarked date in the history of modern higher education. There is no knowledge of an announcement of a comparable program in a German university before the delivery of this address. Here was a glimpse of what humanism, as interpreted by the religious northern mind, might mean to men: the use of the sources made available

through a revived antiquity for the clarification of theology and the discovery of the original intention of the early Christian religion. In Italy the Renaissance was synonymous with skepticism and Epicureanism; in Germany it might be made to yield faith and a higher morality.

Doctor Luther, who had experienced moments of qualm over his own insistence on permitting the distrusted humanism to gain a foothold at Wittenberg, was thoroughly delighted, and two days after Melanchthon's address wrote to Spalatin:

As regards our Philip Melanchthon, everything shall be done as you suggest. On the fourth day after his arrival he delivered a most learned and chaste oration to the delight and admiration of all. It is not now necessary for you to commend him. We quickly retracted the opinion which we had formed when we first saw him. Now we laud and admire the reality in him, and thank the most illustrious Prince and your kindness. Be at pains to commend him most heartily to the Prince. I desire no other Greek teacher so long as we have him. But I fear that his delicate constitution may not bear the mode of life in this country. Also, I hear that because of the smallness of his salary the boastful Leipzig professors hope soon to take him away from us. They solicited him before he came here.⁴

Several years later, when he had come to know him better and admire him even more, Luther wrote a preface to Melanchthon's Commentary on Colossians in which he characterized the new quality the young humanist brought to the Reformation:

I am rough, boistrous, stormy and altogether warlike. I am born to fight against innumerable monsters and devils. I must remove stumps and stones,

⁴Martin Luther, Briefwechsel (Weimer: Hermann Bohlaus, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 192 f.

cut away thistles, and thorns, and clear the wild forests; but Master Philip comes along softly and gently, sowing and watering with joy, according to the gifts which God has abundantly bestowed upon him.⁵

To John Peuchlin, who had recommended Melanchthon for the position at Wittenberg, Luther wrote: "Our Melanchthon is a wonderful man; yea, in every quality of mind almost above humanity, and, withall, very confiding and friendly in his demeanor toward me."⁶

After the first years of discouragement and disappointment, in 1517 the university at Wittenberg had begun to grow rapidly, and the Elector Frederick of Saxony had begun to be very proud of his "high school," as he fondly called it. In April of 1518 he wrote to Peuchlin, the recognized Hebrew scholar of Germany, asking for nominations to the chairs of Greek and Hebrew that he had decided to establish at Wittenberg. Peuchlin promptly replied that "barbarian" and "brutish" Germans desperately needed these studies, and that the "University of Wittenberg will rise to the honor and praise of all Germany by the use of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew tongues." Peuchlin suggested two men for the Hebrew position: Dr. Paul Riccius, a converted Jew and physician to Cardinal von Gurk; or Conrad Pellican, a Franciscan and author of a Hebrew Grammar, one of his own pupils. Pellican, who later translated his name and became famous in the Reformation

⁵Richard, op. cit., p. 42.

⁶von Raumer, op. cit., p. 152.

as Oecolampadius, eventually became the professor of Hebrew. For the Greek position Reuchlin named his own nephew, Philip Schwarzerd of Bretten, a master of arts, insisting that if the young man did not fill the place acceptably he should be returned "free of charge."⁷

There was some delay, however, in making both appointments. Doctor Luther at Wittenberg and Spalatin in the court of Frederick, seemed to favor the famous Peter Mosellanus, recognized Greek scholar at Leipzig, who had already indicated his willingness to accept the position. Melanchthon, meanwhile, was considering an offer from the university at Inglostadt, where he would have become a colleague of Dr. Eck! Growing restless during the delay, and increasingly displeased with his work at Tübingen, Melanchthon wrote an impatient letter to Reuchlin on the 12th of July. He was willing to go wherever Reuchlin would send him, he said, if only to be delivered from his present "house of bondage, where, occupied in unimportant labors with boys I am fast becoming a boy again."⁸ Reuchlin had just received approval of Melanchthon from the Saxon elector, and wrote the good news to his nephew immediately, enclosing the notice of appointment from the elector:

Here you have the letter of the pious prince, signed with his own hand, in which he promises you his favor and protection. I will not address you in the language of poetry, but will

⁷Richard, op. cit., p. 31.

⁸von Raumer, op. cit., p. 151.

quote the faithful promise of God to Abraham:
 "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I shall show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."⁹ So my mind forecasts, and so I hope it will be with thee, my Philip, my work and my consolation.

Such is my advice. Be of good courage. Be not a woman but a man. A prophet is not without honor save in his own country. Farewell.¹⁰

Reuchlin never saw his nephew again. To the elector,

Reuchlin wrote:

Melanchthon will come, and he will be an honor to the university. For I know of no one among the Germans who excels him, save Erasmus of Rotterdam, and he is more properly a Hollander. He surpasses all of us in Latin.¹¹

The incomparable Erasmus himself had written of this lad who was about to become a university professor:

What hopes may we not entertain of Philip Melanchthon, who, though as yet very young and almost a boy, is equally to be admired for his knowledge of both languages? What quickness of invention! What purity of diction! What powers of memory! What clarity of reading! What modes and gracefulness of behavior!¹²

On the journey to Wittenberg from Tübingen, this

⁹Genesis 12:1 f.

¹⁰Melanchthon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 32. The letter is dated July 24.

¹¹ibid., Vol. I, p. 34. (Erasmus "surpasses all of us in Latin.")

¹²This comment is cited by almost every historian of the period, but Schaff (op. cit., p. 110) is one of the few who gives the documentation: Annotat. ad Non. Test. (Basel, 1516), folio 555.

already famous young humanist stopped over for a brief rest at Augsburg, where he received and declined another urgent call to the university at Ingolstadt. At Leipzig he was feted by city and university officials with a banquet at which he declined the honor of making a formal oration because of his youth and inexperience, and in spite of the promise of better pay rejected a request to remain as professor of Greek at the university.¹³

B. Background and Training

With Philip Melancthon a new and tempered influence entered the inner circle of the reformers. Though not an independent and forceful personality, the sophisticated charm of his humanistic intellectualism and his cultural background wrought significant though unpremeditated alterations in the developing character of the Reformation.

Philip was born at Bretten in Baden, February 16, 1497, the oldest son of George Schwarzerd, famous military engineer and personal armorer for the Emperor Maximilian I, last of the medieval knights. Bretten was a small city in southern Germany, and though on the trade route from Italy to the lower Rhine most of its citizens were conservative farmers. In 1504 five persons were burned at the stake for witchcraft in Bretten, and the people had a wide reputation for stern piety and zeal for the church.¹⁴ His father was

¹³Richard, op. cit., pp. 34 f. Cf. Melancthonis, op. cit., Vol. XI, pp. 25 ff.

¹⁴Hill, op. cit., p. 19.

away from home a great deal with the emperor's troops, and Philip's maternal grandfather, John Reuther, took most of the responsibility for the boy. It was this grandfather who sent Philip to the village school which was taught by John Hungarius, and it was Hungarius who gave Philip his first lessons in Latin and taught him to read from the poems of Batista Mantuanus:

I had a teacher who was an excellent grammarian and who kept me constantly at the grammar ... Whenever I made a slip he whipped me, but with mildness and forbearance. He was a good-hearted man; he loved me as a son, I him as a father.¹⁵

Philip early established himself as a precocious child, and by constant practice at last succeeded in overcoming a stammering habit that had plagued him in childhood.

Plague broke out in Bretten the year that Philip was ten, and within eleven days he lost both his grandfather and his father, whom he had known so little as a boy. On his deathbed George Schwarzerd said to his oldest son: "I have witnessed many commotions, but there are far greater to come. I pray God that he would guide you safely through them. Fear God and do right."¹⁶ Almost immediately after the double tragedy Philip and his brother George were taken to the city of Pforzheim by their widowed grandmother, Elizabeth Reuther, who fled in grief and fear from the stricken Bretten. Thus it was that misfortune changed the

¹⁵von Raumer, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

life of Philip Schwarzerd.

At Pforzheim Philip soon matriculated in the famous Latin school of the city, and was instructed by George Sialer of Wimpfen in Greek.

Another and more important influence was to enter Philip's life at Pforzheim: his grandmother, Elizabeth Reuther, was a sister of the greatest scholar of languages in Germany, John Reuchlin. At that time Reuchlin lived in Pforzheim and was a frequent visitor at his sister's home. Reuchlin was delighted with the developing linguistic genius of his grandnephew, and gave him every possible encouragement in his studies. He gave Philip a Greek grammar, a Greek dictionary and a small Bible; on one occasion he brought him a little red doctor's cap; he also gave him the translation of his original name, black earth, into Greek - Melanchthon. Meanwhile Philip wrote verses under Reuchlin's guidance, and once he and his friends memorized and surprized the famous scholar with a presentation of one of his own Greek comedies. And when the time quickly came and Philip was ready, it was his uncle Reuchlin who persuaded Philip, now Melanchthon, to leave Pforzheim and enter the university at Heidelberg.

Philip matriculated at Heidelberg in 1509, two years after he had begun the Latin school at Pforzheim, when he was but twelve years old. It was quite natural that Reuchlin should have chosen Heidelberg for his brilliant young protege: not only did he have personal contacts there, but it had been

a famous school. Philip was received into the family of the aging theological professor Palsas Spangel, who had taught in the university since 1477. Peuchlin's brother Dionysius had been professor of Greek in Heidelberg, and Peuchlin himself had been a teacher there in his younger years. The elector of the Palatinate, Philip, had given the school generous support, and during Peuchlin's days Rudolph Agricola had been induced to come to the university by the Baron of Dalberg, who had known the humanist in Italy. Conrad Celtes, the first German poet to be honored with a crown from the emperor, had been a teacher there. It was at Heidelberg that Dalberg had founded the Rhenish Literary Association. But Agricola had died in 1485, Dalberg in 1503, Celtes in 1508, and Philip did not find Heidelberg the university that his uncle had remembered it to be.¹⁷ Melanchthon was deeply disappointed in the course he received, and busied himself with a curriculum of his own choosing:

At the university nothing was placed before us but their babbling dialectics and meagre physics. As I, however, had learned the art of versifying, I applied myself to the poets, and likewise to history and mythology. I read, too, all the moderns of Politian's school whom I could lay my hands on; and this was not without its influence upon my style.¹⁸

But despite his lack of interest in the garrula dialectices and the particula physices and his devotion of time to the classics, Philip took his baccalaureate in the minimum time

¹⁷ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

under Leonhard Dietrich, the professor of philosophy. He received the degree in 1511, when he was fourteen years old. He plunged immediately, as was the custom, into the theological curriculum, and began the study of scholasticism under Jacob Lemp, the professor who thoroughly disgusted his brilliant young scholar by trying to diagram transubstantiation on the blackboard.¹⁹ To occupy his spare time during the year of residence required for the master's course, Philip became tutor for the two sons of Count Lowenstein and drew up for them the first outlines of a grammar of the Greek language,²⁰ but when he presented himself in 1512 for the master's degree, the board of directors refused to grant it because of his extreme youth.

Thoroughly discouraged with the lack of opportunity for study and advancement at Heidelberg, Philip transferred to the university at Tübingen, where he found ample scope for his brilliant mind and wide interests. The University of Tübingen was a new school, founded by Eberhard the Elder, first duke of Wurtemberg, in 1477. From the beginning it had been a school noted for its freedom of thought and the famous professors drawn by its freedom from intellectual restrictions. Gabriel Biel, strong Occamite nominalist under whose influence Luther had learned theology, was a professor there. Paul Scriptoris, a Franciscan, taught some courses in the

¹⁹Hill, op. cit., p. 22, footnote.

²⁰von Raumer, op. cit., p. 148.

works of the nominalist Duns Scotus, but he himself remained a staunch realist. With Summerhart, professor of theology, who sought to base his teaching on the Bible, scriptoribus learned to read Hebrew. Hildebrand taught Greek and Hebrew exclusively for the sake of the Old and New Testaments, and Melanchthon sat under his distinguished instruction. Heinrich Bebel was Melanchthon's professor of poetry and eloquence, and was currently engaged in a bold and direct approach to the classics that brought attacks from local monasteries as anti-Christian. George Simler, who had but recently come to Tübingen from Heidelberg, introduced Melanchthon to Aristotle, and John Stoffler, already famous as a mathematician, taught his classes in astronomy. Cecolampadius, who was later to become his colleague at Wittenberg, gave Philip private lessons in Greek. Melanchthon found the course a thorough one at Tübingen: he read Cicero, Demosthenes and Quintillian for rhetoric, three books of Agricola on rhetoric, and devoted some time to Pliny.²¹

In 1514, at the age of seventeen, Philip Melanchthon was graduated from the University of Tübingen as a magister artium, and immediately entered upon his duties as a junior instructor in ancient languages, beginning his lectures with Virgil and Terence and later including Livy and Cicero. In 1516 he published an edition of Terence in which he had transposed the verses into meter, and in the dedication

²¹cf. Hill, op. cit., p. 22; von Raumer, op. cit., p. 148.

commented on the value of the poet as a teacher of morals as well as of style.²² That same year, while Melanchthon was nineteen, Heinrich Bebel died, and Melanchthon was invited to fill the chair left vacant by the famous humanist. During the year that Melanchthon was filling Bebel's unexpired term, the Logic of Agricola grew in popularity, and the young professor used it in examining the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero with his classes. While he was working on the text of the Greek grammar he proposed to publish, Melanchthon became acquainted with Francis Stadian, the professor of logic at Tübingen, and began to translate the works of Aristotle for his friend. In the first edition of the Greek grammar, which came out in 1518, Melanchthon announced his intention to publish a translation of the original Aristotle. "If Aristotle, even in the original, is somewhat obscure," he announced, "in the Latin versions he has become horribly mutilated and wholly unintelligible."²³ The translation promised to work a revolution among the scholars who had been diligently attempting to explain statements that Aristotle had never actually made. Meanwhile the indefatigable young professor attended mathematical lectures, studied law and perhaps gave private instruction in jurisprudence, heard medical lectures and read Galen, revised Nauchler's original history of the world

²²Comoediae P. Terentii metro numerisque restitutae (Tübingen, 1516). The book went into several editions.

²³von Raumer, op. cit., p. 149.

for a new and enlarged edition, studied the Bible independently, and worked as proofreader for Thomas Anshelm, the Tübingen printer.

This was the amazing youth who at twenty-one declared to the leaders of the Reformation in Wittenberg the importance of ancient culture and the current Renaissance to the understanding of their own New Theology. He had spent practically all of his life in school. He had sat at the feet of the greatest humanists of northern Europe. He had assimilated the best of the culture of the new learning. He stood on the shoulders of the entire sophisticated Renaissance movement and was prepared to interpret it and adapt it to the coarse integrity of the Reformation. He brought the fragrance of a new air to the frosty, smoky and earnest atmosphere of Wittenberg.

2. The Renaissance

The Renaissance was the revolt of intelligent man from the dark prison of institutionalism in which the medieval church had bound him, soul, heart and mind. It was the rediscovery of a zest for the present that the Middle Ages had held bound and gagged as long as it could. A release of thought was the achievement of the Renaissance, so vigorous when it found freedom that it lashed out in all directions at once, upsetting ancient standards and discarding traditional values in every sphere possible. It shattered

the darkness that the medieval mind had caused to lie over men and the world in which he lived like a lightning bolt, and flashed the blinding light of reason and revelation at once over the quality of man's own nature. Thus the Renaissance made the Reformation possible, for without seeing himself in the cold light of honesty could men throw himself with abandon upon God. "My home is the world," exulted Dante. Petrarch struggled up the steep peak of Mount Ventuz in France in 1335, not as a pious exercise, but for the joy of the experience of self-exertion and to see the view. The Renaissance discovered fields, flowers, hills, brooks, birds, rain, sunshine, the symmetry of curves, the human figure, the warmth of color, the rhythms of light and shadow, good food, heated rooms, and in its best moods many other things that gave man an appetite for life.

It was a complete reversal of point of view. The medieval monk abhorred all these things. Sunk in the anonymity of his shapeless cowl he turned his pious eyes inward and overwhelmed himself with thoughts of the awfulness of life, the sweetness of death, and the promise of the eternal life that would be his if he could isolate himself from the world enough to commit no sin. Beauty and pleasure were a sin and a curse, and this life was but a temporary moment in the awe-inspiring rush to death and eternity. Ignorance was a certain proof of faith that desired to know nothing but God, and torture of the body and withdrawal from the contaminating world was the only sure way to peace.

A. Italian Humanism

Humanism was the first fruit of the Renaissance which changed all this. The Renaissance sought to glorify God by turning man's mind upon himself. Scholasticism, the academic development of the medieval age, went in for abstract thought and the dialectic pursuit of truth; humanism, the intellectual expression of the new movement, turned its energies to investigating the noblest products of man's own mind, the literature of Greece and Rome. "Back to the sources," was its motto, and it gave new life to ancient traditions, new respect for the Christianity of pre-Roman days, and new scope to individual thought and investigation. Without humanism the Reformation could never have happened in the way it did: humanism furnished its basis of private religious judgment, its tools of historical criticism, its handmaids of Greek and Hebrew, its spirit of criticism for contemporary institutions.

These were the permanent and constructive values. However, the immature, impetuous plunge of the Renaissance into the present tense cannot be ignored. In spite of the balancing influence of reformers like Pico della Mirandola and Savonarola, wholesome selfconsciousness rapidly deteriorated into immoral self-centeredness. The Renaissance spirit surprized the Middle Ages in mid-stride, with one foot in the air, and the usual result followed: an ungraceful tumble. Especially in Italy the Renaissance humanism became

uncontrolled, inchoate, intemperate, inconsistent. "You might as well try to control the stars in their courses, or the sea in its tides," said Cosimo de Medici from his position at the ringside, "as to bind the Renaissance."²⁴ Pico della Mirandola freely combined the theosophy of the Jewish Kabbala with Greek philosophy and the fruit of his study of the Scriptures in the original languages was that he was forced to flee to France from charges of heresy in Italy.²⁵ The intoxication of the new freedom led at times to an almost pure paganism. Cosimo de' Medici, Julius II and Leo X are type-characters from the cast of the Renaissance drama. "You follow infinite objects; I follow the finite," said Cosimo, "you place your ladders in the heavens, I on earth, that I may not seek so high or fall so low." "If we are not ourselves pious," said Pope Julius II, in true character, "why should we prevent other people from being so?" "Let us enjoy the papacy," said Leo X, the Medicean pope who never understood Martin Luther, "now that God has given it to us."²⁶ The luxury of pope Alexander Borgis has become a legend, the details of which have no doubt been embroidered by imagination, but whose basic facts are documented:

²⁴Alexander Clarence Flick, The Decline of the Medieval Church (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), Vol. II, p. 225. James Mackinnon, The Origins of the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939), chapters XXII and XXIII, has vivid material on the Renaissance, as does Flick in chapter XX.

²⁵Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 360.

²⁶John Herman Randall, Jr., The Making of the Modern Mind (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 124.

marvelous Vatican chambers lavished with the inimitable art of the Renaissance painters who painted Madonna and Venus alike with loving patience, Madonna and saints on the walls, Isis and Osiris on the ceiling, masqued balls with nobility masquerading as holy saints and classic goddesses, the pleasures of La Bella Giulia and the adored children of the pope, the celebration of Grecian rites on holy fast days.

At the University of Paris the Feast of Fools gave priests and young men preparing for the priesthood an opportunity to indulge in the freedom the Renaissance had provided, once each year at New Year's time. All repressions were released in the most accepted Renaissance manner: priests wore the clothing of women, they ate candy and cakes at the altar rail while the mass was being celebrated, they sang rowdy songs in the choir, shook dice on the chancel steps, and led the processions through the church with dancing, substituting the incense of old leather shoes for the more traditional variety. Their justification was the typical humanist reasoning:

But we do those things in jest and not seriously, as has been the custom from antiquity, in order that the folly innate in us may escape and evaporate once a year. Would not wineskins and casks often break asunder were not their bungholes occasionally opened? We indeed are old bottles and half-broken casks, wherefore the wine of wisdom, fermenting overmuch, which we retain under pressure through the whole year in the service of God, would flow forth to no purpose if we did not occasionally recreate ourselves with games and follies. Therefore there

should sometimes be an opportunity for jests, to the end that we may thereafter return the fitter for retaining wisdom.²⁷

B. German Humanism

Generally, however, as the Renaissance pushed across the Alps, the chill climate and the sober spirit of northern Europe cooled the intemperate passions and wild spirit of Italian humanism into a more reasonable ardor for intellectualism. Germans possessed little of the pagan exuberance of the Italians, and being more conservative by nature they created a more permanent and useful monument to the humanistic spirit than their passionate southern neighbors ever conceived. The Italian humanists sought enjoyment and creation, and the Christian pattern gave way to an easy-going Greek system in which life was an art to be mastered by men of leisure. The Germans lived a more difficult life in which labor and self-discipline were eternal motifs, and religion was ethical and democratic. While the popes were reveling in beauty and free-spirited humanists were putting the earnest Savonarola to death, northern humanists were studying Greek and Hebrew and examining the text of the Scriptures. The Teutons discovered that man's nature was tremendously complex,

²⁷Lynn Thorndike, University Records and Life in the Middle Ages (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), #149, pp. 343 ff.: condemnation of the Feast of Fools, Paris, March 12, 1445; letter and fourteen conclusions of the faculty of Paris to prelates of the churches against the Feast of Fools celebrated on the eighth day of the Lord's nativity or the first of January in certain churches.

and that his spiritual nature deserved cultivation fully as much as his intellectual. The German intellect was "critical, pugnacious, exploratory, intense, argumentative, and determined,"²⁸ and at his hands the Italian Renaissance underwent trenchant alterations: in the north the spirit of the Renaissance became a permanent addition to the modern mind, but in the south the flame of passion burned briefly though brilliantly, and soon Italy had sunk back into an almost medieval feudalism and spiritual darkness.

The Renaissance did not take Germany by storm, and Germany passed by easy stages from medieval faith to free intellectualism. The foundation of the university at Louvain in 1426 was an important step in the process, and the older universities at Heidelberg and Erfurt took an early lead in introducing the New Learning to northern minds. The first of the outstanding German humanists were Rudolph Agricola, Rudolph von Langen, and Alexander Hegius, pupils of the Brethren of the Common Life whose Christian mysticism was touched by the scholarship of the learned Italians; all of them abandoned scholasticism and worked for educational reform without criticizing radically the system of the church. To them succeeded in the late fifteenth century men whose learning had freed them from the medieval mind, but who remained essentially appreciative of most of the external atmosphere of the medieval world. Strassburg, Augsburg and

²⁸Flick, op. cit., p. 248.

Nuremberg became sources of liberal learning: Sebastian Brandt, who lashed the follies and vices of his age in his Narrenschiff, was a native of Strassburg, as was Jacob Wimpfeling, the educational reformer; at Augsburg lived Hans Holbein, the painter, and Conrad Peutinger²⁹ returned to Augsburg from Italy with an intense love of the classics; at Nuremberg was the famous Willibald Pirckheimer,³⁰ patron of Albrecht Dürer and adviser of kings, who found his love for antiquity and beauty in Italy. His house in the market-place was near that of Behaim,³¹ the maker of maps and globes, and not far from that of the astronomer Regiomontanus.³² In this middle group of German humanists belong the most famous and influential of them all, Erasmus and Reuchlin. Erasmus, greatest scholar of the century and citizen of all Europe, edited the Bible, by his subtle and witty sarcasm undermined the medieval system, and in many ways prepared for the Reformation which was to break his heart. Reuchlin was brilliant, learned, was influenced by Pico della Mirandola, and brought the New Learning to the popular attention of Germany through his intense personal dispute with Pfefferkorn over the value of Hebrew writings. Most radical of the German humanists were the younger men like Crotus Rubianus, Ulrich von Hutten and Johannus Hesseus, who gathered about Mutianus Rufus at

²⁹1465-1547; returned to Augsburg from Italy in 1486.

³⁰1470-1528; studied at Padua and Pavia.

³¹1459-1506.

³²1436-1476; German name was Johannes Müller; settled in Nuremberg for the study of astronomy in 1471.

Gotha to jibe bitter and sophisticated fun at almost everybody. The idol of the men of this radical group was a disintegrating critic of everything traditional and sacred like Lorenzo Valla, who exposed the forgery of the Donation of Constantine on which the papacy rested its legal claim to temporal sovereignty, and hardheaded critic of the Latin Vulgate Bible. In his work The Monastic Life Valla denied all value to ascetism and "holiness," and in another treatise, On Pleasure, he sympathized with the Epicurean who places the highest good in tranquil pleasure, and declared that the prostitute is better than the nun in that she makes men happy while the nun lives in shameful and futile celibacy, and called it irrational to die for one's country or any other ideal. Pleasure, he said sarcastically, is also the primary end of the Christian, though it may be in another life.³³ "How brilliant Valla is," wrote von Hutten in a letter of February 27, 1469. "He has raised up Latin to glory from the bondage of the barbarians."³⁴ Von Hutten published Valla's work on the Donation of Constantine for use in Germany, and with the incredible daring of left-wing German humanism dedicated it to Leo X, daring him publicly to condemn the publication.

Though the Renaissance spirit never achieved the tremendous popularity in Germany that it did in Italy, it exercised widespread influence. "A new and rebellious language

³³Cf. Randall, op. cit., p. 124.

³⁴Quoted by Binns (op. cit., p. 327).

has been invented," a Dominican preacher is said to have sneered from his pulpit in Germany, "it is called Greek. In it has been written a book full of dangerous passages; the New Testament by name."³⁵

(1) Erasmus

Of them all, Desiderius Erasmus was unquestionably the greatest; the fact was generally admitted, even by his self-sufficient contemporaries and Erasmus himself. Erasmus represented not only the highest achievements of European scholarship, but the most valuable direction of humanist interests. His enthusiasms were as broadly humanitarian and intellectual as the mind of man could permit, but always the spirit of Erasmus remained, as did that of northern Europe, a religious spirit. His mind turned to a scholarly study of the New Testament and the church fathers as well as to the pagan classics, his criticism to the church as well as to society, his desire for rationality and reasonableness of life to the sphere of religion as well as to abstract intellectual training.

His weaknesses, too, were characteristic of the mind of northern humanism. He never shared the Italian's penchant for art, and he was totally unconcerned with the new physical world that scientists were beginning to open before men; his interests were specifically restricted to the problems of morality, and to this area he brought a spirit of toleration,

³⁵Flick, op. cit., pp. 246 f.

conciliation and mediation that effectively dissipated any creative or radical insights that he might have had. Always witty, urbane, charming, he remained conservative, without courage or incisive conviction. He enjoyed destroying old prejudices, but had very little to offer in replacement. He was convinced above all things that man was created to be a rational animal, but was met on all sides with proof that man was unhappily not achieving his destiny; since he was too rational a creature himself to give way to bitterness, he turned his great gifts of subtle irony and biting sarcasm upon the failures of the other men of his generation to achieve the pinnacle of civilization from which he viewed the amusing struggle of common folk. For years he moved in the intellectual society of Cicero and Horace, and looked out upon the world from the cool and isolated atmosphere of ancient Greece. He amused himself by holding up to polite laughter the follies of the monk, the blindness of the scholastic doctor, and the irrationalism of religious formality. All things, he felt, must find a golden mean, and he prided himself on being "the Christianizer of the Renaissance and the humanizer of Christianity."³⁶ In the "philosophy of Christ" he discovered "the life of reason warmed by benevolent love," and when he read Socrates he could hardly refrain from saying, "Saint Socrates, pray for me." The cool detachment and enviable sophistication of the ancients

³⁶Randall, op. cit., pp. 131-34.

entranced him:

Their philosophy lies rather in the affections than in syllogisms, it is a life more than a debate, an inspiration rather than a discipline; a transformation rather than a reasoning. What else, pray, is the philosophy of Christ?³⁷

Erasmus found in the progressive nurture of educational methods the ideal way of bringing about the Greco-Christian society for which he longed. In his book De Ratione Studii he gives rules for instruction in literature, for the study of grammar, for the cultivation of memory, and for explanation of the Greek and Latin authors. In another book, De Pueris Statim ac Liberaliter Instituendis, Erasmus writes specifically of the "first liberal education of children," studies the personality and character of children of different age groups, and recommends that the usually barbarous discipline of contemporary schools be discarded for methods that are attractive to children. He also debates how early children may profitably be started on academic studies. Chivalry and etiquette were necessities for Erasmus, and he is one of the first educators to urge that politeness be taught; well-ordered conduct was for Erasmus an important indication of a well-ordered soul, and possessed definite moral values. As a whole, men of the Renaissance did not exclude women from appreciation of the literary treasures they had recovered from antiquity, but Erasmus advocated the admission of women to equal instruction with men in all

³⁷Preserved Smith, Erasmus (New York: Harper Brothers, 1923), p. 53.

schools, and in a book he called Christian Marriage Erasmus turned his always charming satire on young ladies who learn only to bow, to hold the hands properly crossed, bite their lips when they were tempted to laugh, and to satisfy their appetites in advance of public dinners so that they would eat and drink only ladylike portions at table. He urged ladies to become well educated so that they would be able to train their own children and take part in the intellectual life of their husbands.³⁸ In all spheres of life - religion, education, society, family - Erasmus urged moderation, tolerant intellectualism and cool detachment.

Desiderius Erasmus was born at Rotterdam on the 28th of October, 1467, the illegitimate son of a priest. At the age of four he was put into the school of the Brethren of the Common Life at Utrecht, where he remembered that he made but little advancement. In his ninth year he entered the school of the Brethren at Deventer, where Alexander Hegius was rector. Under better teaching Erasmus developed his genius rapidly, and Rudolph Agricola was surprised and delighted at the originality of style that the boy displayed on one of his examinations. Thereafter Agricola personally befriended the lad and encouraged him to continue his study. Soon he latinized his family name, Gerardus Gerardi, to that by which he is known to posterity, and wandered about Europe

³⁸S. S. Laurie, Studies in the History of Educational Opinion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 56 f.

teaching, writing and publishing. England tried to make him her own, and for several periods he taught at Oxford, but he refused to make any country his fatherland and became a citizen of the world. He was always distressed with the seriousness of the Germans, and from the first distrusted the violence and coarse integrity of the Reformation movement under Luther. His was a spirit of an entirely different kind. He was humanist, delicate, subtle, abstract, and above all too rational to be swept off his feet by any brilliant incision into the contemporary world, even his own.

(2) Peter Luders

Peter Luders was one of the first of the German humanists, and represents a sharp contrast both to the humanism of Erasmus and to the more typically Teutonic adaptation of the Renaissance spirit made by Alexander Hegius and the Brethren of the Common Life. Luders was born in 1415, and trained in the common schools of Germany for a life in the priesthood, but as a young man he wandered into Italy where he was converted to the paganistic tendencies of the Italian Renaissance and the disregard for moral standards that frequently characterized the southern humanism. The year 1444 found him at Padua giving private instruction to some German students, through whom his fame came to the elector of the Palatinate who invited him to come to the University of Heidelberg to teach Latin. At Heidelberg the older professors opened a campaign to make life miserable for the young

renegade from Italy: they insisted on reading and revising his introductory lectures, refused him the use of the library, and refused to associate with him. In 1460 Luders gave up the struggle and moved to Erfurt where he was lecturer in "Poetry and Eloquence," marking the first concession Luther's university made to the New Learning. But Luders' was a restless spirit, fully in character with left-wing humanism, and he spent most of the rest of his life wandering from town to town, teaching briefly in universities, and finding private students in the larger cities. He was thoroughly irreligious and held all theology in strong contempt, his life was not above moral reproach, and he became a great drinker of German beer and wine, spreading his reputation as he traveled. He seems to have been able to keep his heretical views to himself when he was sober, but occasionally he betrayed himself: at last in Basel he was accused of denying the doctrine of the Trinity, and he did not add to his respectability by asserting that he would willingly confess to four persons in the Godhead if his accusers would but let him alone. This Italian of the German humanists died in 1474, a teacher of medicine in Vienna.³⁹

(3) Rudolph Agricola

Other men of ability and intellectual daring continued the process Luders had begun. The process of adapting

³⁹Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 59 f.

the Italian spirit of freedom and scholarship to the more literal-minded, prosaic German temperament was one that demanded genius and flexibility. Rudolph Agricola is said to have accomplished for Germany what Petrarch did for Italy,⁴⁰ a parallel that may have been suggested by the fact that Agricola wrote a biography of Petrarch in the vernacular German. Agricola was born Rudolf Huisman in 1443, and after his early training studied at Erfurt, Louvain and Cologne in northern Europe, and then wandered into Italy where he heard lectures at Pavia and Ferrara. In 1479 he returned to Germany after visiting Rome and becoming even more cynical about the institutionalized religion of his medieval century, and in 1482 became a professor at Heidelberg where he lectured on the literature of Greece and Rome and his influence was felt by Melanchthon. Both Melanchthon and Erasmus gave him their highest praise, and Melanchthon tells that his life was both pure and pious: Agricola's native German earnestness had tempered his humanism into a Teutonic product.

(4) Sebastian Brandt

Sebastian Brandt exercised tremendous influence in the cause of the New Learning in Germany through the incredible popularity of his only known work The Ship of Fools, a pungent political satire that caught the imagination of German readers and rapidly swept over Europe in French, Dutch

⁴⁰Flick, op. cit., p. 253.

and English translations. The Narrenschiff was a seagoing vessel manned by a hundred and ten fools who plotted a course over the sea of life. The crew included a Book-fool, a Money-fool, a Fashion-fool and a Fool-of-useless-studies, all of whom were universally recognizable characters, and complicated the voyage in perverse and amusing ways. The ship was sailed hard by the Land of Idlers to put in at the Land of Fools, where the crew found themselves wholly at home. The ignorance and immorality of the clergy came in for a thorough lashing during the course of the events, and the poem caught first the popular fancy and then the popular dissatisfactions. The author of this most popular single writing of the generation was born in Basel in 1457,⁴¹ and attended the university in his native town, remaining to become a professor of law. Basel was a center of humanistic thinking, and Erasmus made several short residences there in order to be near the famous printing presses of the city.

(5) Conrad Celtes

Conrad Celtes, who died the year before Melanchthon went to Tübingen but left a pungent influence on the entire university for many years, was another of those courageous thinkers who transplanted humanism from the sunny soil of Italy to the hard earth of northern Europe. Celtes studied at several German universities, and then followed Agricola

⁴¹Died 1521.

and Luders to Italy where he visited Ferrara, Padua and Rome. For most of his life, with the exception of the closing years at Tübingen, he was a wandering apostle of the New Learning. His wandering mission carried him as far as Poland and Hungary, where he founded humanistic societies modeled after those he had known in Italy. His poems are tinged with typical Italian paganism, but his freedom of spirit and his candid criticism of the accepted world of tradition in which he lived, started many a German mind toward independence of thought.⁴²

(6) Conrad Mut

Conrad Mut, or Mutianus Rufus, the "red-haired," as he restyled himself, was one of the radical German humanists, whose very extremism pales when contrasted to the pagan epicureanism of the Italians, and indicates the tempering influence Germany unconsciously held over her humanistic sons. From Gotha, where he eventually settled down as a canon of the church he freely criticized, he influenced students at nearby Erfurt with his radicalism of thought and freedom from normal social standards. The "Humanists' Circle," which became famous a few years after Luther left the university at Erfurt, was his creation and personal monument. Conrad was born at Homburg in 1471, studied under Hegius at Deventer, continued his higher education at Erfurt, and

⁴²Flick, op. cit., p. 254; Celtes died in 1508, was born in 1459.

became an instructor there in 1492. In 1495 he set out for Italy and traveled through its cities, meeting the southern humanists, for seven years. In 1502 he returned to Germany, and for a while tried official life, but soon accepted the appointment to the church at Gotha. In Italy he had studied with Pico della Mirandola at Florence, and had taken a degree in law at Bologna, and the stamp of Italian humanism never left him. He was far from orthodox in his theology: "The true Christ is not a man, but spirit and soul," he said, and maintained an intellectual eclecticism in religion that resulted in a combination of the Greek Pantheon with Moses and Christ. His interpretation of traditional Christian doctrines was independent, and he easily discarded the resurrection of the body, denounced fasts, the confessional and masses for the dead, and called the monks "cowled monsters," with no thought of breaking from the church. "He was typical of that group of humanists who fought for intellectual freedom from the people's slavish fear of the medieval priesthood,"⁴³ and furnished a background against which Luther's denouncements of Catholic institutions did not appear either new or fantastic.

⁴³Flick, *op. cit.*, pp. 250 f.; see also Henry Osborn Taylor, *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), Vol. I, pp. 149 ff.

(7) Ulrich von Hutten

One of the most exciting of the radical German humanists was Ulrich von Hutten, destined for the monastery by his nobleman father in boyhood and flagrantly rebellious throughout the rest of his life. He broke away from the monastery and attended the University of Cologne. In Italy, following his university career, he discovered the uncompromising hostility of the monks and clergy to humanism, and became convinced of the absolute necessity for a complete reform from the pope to the parish priest, inclusively. As early as 1513 he was denouncing Pope Julius II as "the corrupter of the earth, the plague of mankind."⁴⁴ In 1517 he accepted a place at the court of the gay humanist Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, whose irregularities amused him and annoyed Luther. That same year he published his German edition of Lorenzo Valla's exposé of the Donation of Constantine, and in 1518 he wrote vigorously in support of Reuchlin in the Pfefferkorn dispute. He was the most outspoken of all the German humanists, and even excelled Luther in the sharpness of the barbs he thrust into the shaking sides of the medieval church: he ridiculed the holy coat at Treves as "a lousy old rag" and said the relics of the Three Kings of Christmas at Cologne were only the remnants of three Westphalian peasants. He said that the pope was trembling in fear of the discovery

⁴⁴Flick, op. cit., p. 257, citing Strauss, Gesprache von Hutten, Vol. I, pp. 99 ff.

of the worldliness, corruption and immoralities that Hutten was determined to expose, and hinted that the growing intelligence of the people was to be the downfall of the church. He wrote to Luther: "We are fighting for a common freedom to liberate an oppressed Fatherland," but it is doubtful if Luther welcomed his assistance. Naturally von Hutten was placed under papal ban, and even Erasmus turned against him, so that after 1520 he was forced to flee to Switzerland, where he died in 1523.⁴⁵

(8) John Reuchlin

In the year that Martin Luther was born, an unknown young German student appeared at the home of John Argyropolous in Rome with letters of introduction and a request to be permitted to stay and study with the same Greek instructor. Argyropolous was entertaining a party of Italian humanists that afternoon, and he invited the youthful stranger to meet the group. When he gave him a Thucydides and asked him to construe a page or two in Latin, John Reuchlin translated with such ease and elegance that the company exclaimed that Greece had flown across the Alps to settle in Germany.⁴⁶

The admiration of John Argyropolous and his friends was well given, for John Reuchlin was soon to become the most brilliant scholar of languages in all northern Europe. He

⁴⁵Plick, op. cit., pp. 257 ff.

⁴⁶Lindsay, op. cit., p. 68.

most distinction and influence into history. In 1520 Reuchlin went to the University of Inglostadt to teach Greek and Hebrew, but an outbreak of the plague drove him to Tübingen within the year. He died in 1522, the most profound scholar of his age, capable representative of the best in German humanism.⁴⁷

Reuchlin was a man whose mind was touched with genius, and he was much more than a Hebrew scholar, though it is as such, through a strange and fantastic sequence of events which could only happen in an age of transition, that he has become known to later generations. Reuchlin found in Hebrew both a language and literature of peculiar fascination. Hebrew, to his age, was the original human language; to Reuchlin it was even more: it was the language God himself had spoken to Adam, Noah and the Patriarchs. Through his study of the language in his typically direct fashion with Jewish rabbis, he had learned of the vast Hebrew literature outside the Old Testament, and he became convinced that in the Kabbala and traditional books of Hebrew wisdom-lore was preserved a secret and mysterious hidden wisdom which had been revealed to the Jews by divinely sent angels. Reuchlin's personal faith emerged as a typically humanistic and syncretistic theosophy, with this difference, that Reuchlin found his base in Hebrew rather than in Greek literature. In a little book he called De Verbo Mirifico, cast into the form of a discourse between himself, Baruch and Sidonius, Reuchlin

⁴⁷Plick, op. cit., p. 255.

sets forth his mystical faith: "God is love; man is hope; the bond between them is faith ... God and man may be so combined in an indescribable union that the human God and the divine man may be considered as one thing."⁴⁸

Medieval scholasticism had become during the last century a sterile sort of mental exercise, but the scholastics themselves were intelligent men and had for some time been well aware that the kind of thinking being released by the Renaissance humanists would all too soon destroy the temple of medieval faith in which their forefathers had long worshipped. The new interest in the Hebrew language offered the scholastic traditionalists the opportunity for which they had been searching: they could attack the obscure and little known language, confusing the main issues at stake between themselves and the humanists, and if necessary inflame the latent popular resentment of the growing class of wealthy Jewish traders and money-lenders. And so all Germany began to hear that Hebrew was the language of the people who had crucified Christ; it was an evil language and anyone who studied it should be immediately suspected of heresy. A converted Jew named Pfefferkorn was used as a tool to open the attack, and between 1506 and 1509 he published four books against the Jews, Judenspiegel, Judenbeichte, Osternbuch, and Judenfeind, in which he whispered that all Jewish books should be confiscated and burned, hinted that Jews should be

⁴⁸Lindsay, op. cit., p. 69, citing the 1552 edition of De Verbo Mirifico, p. 71.

forced to listen to Christian sermons, and suggested that the Jews should be forbidden to practice usury.⁴⁹

The books were in the sly, suggestive style of obscurantism that people have always read with avidity, and the campaign of discredit was so successful that before long the emperor gave the Archbishop of Mainz orders to advise him on the wisdom of burning all Jewish books except the Old Testament. The archbishop turned immediately to the greatest non-Jewish scholar of Hebrew in Germany, and asked John Reuchlin for an opinion in the matter. Reuchlin replied in November of 1510 that there were seven classes of writing in Hebrew literature, six of which were unquestionably of permanent value. The Old Testament was Jewish, and no one would seriously consider destroying it, while the Talmud was a collection of commentaries on the Jewish law, and no one could express an opinion about it unless he had read it through; Reuchlin himself had been able to secure only portions of the Talmud for investigation, but his opinion of the part he had read was that it contained many good things, nothing contrary to Christianity, and ought not to be destroyed. The Kabbala was a book of ancient wisdom coming directly from God and his angels, and according to Reuchlin, who prized it highly, was above reproach. The whole group of commentaries on the Old Testament books might prove to be very useful to Christianity, and therefore should be preserved, while on

⁴⁹Lindsay, op. cit., p. 69.

the other hand the books of sermons and ritual were part of the Jewish religion, the practice of which was protected by imperial law. There was a class of books on arts and sciences, but only the parts of these books which taught forbidden arts like magic and witchcraft should be burned. And finally, there was a group of books of poetry and fables, which, if after thorough investigation revealed insults to Christ, the Virgin and Apostles, might be burned. Reuchlin added that the best way to deal with the Jews was not to burn their books, but to meet them in reasonable and sympathetic discussion, for the Jews possessed an ancient culture from which the Germans might learn a great deal.⁵⁰

Reuchlin's reply, of course, was neither what the obscurantists expected nor wanted, and the controversy soon broke into an open attack upon Reuchlin and the Jews. Pfefferkorn published an attack entitled Handmirror, and Reuchlin replied with Spectacles. Pfefferkorn was soon off the press with The Burning Glass, and tension and interest in all Germany mounted as Reuchlin came back with A Defense against All Calumniators.⁵¹ As the conflict grew more bitter the epithets became more picturesque, and both parties began to find support: to Reuchlin came most of the German humanists, who felt that they were being attacked through the person of Reuchlin, and from Carlstadt and Luther in Wittenberg came letters of encouragement. Two trials were held in

⁵⁰Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 70 f.

⁵¹Plick, op. cit., p. 256.

Germany and then the case was appealed to Rome where Leo X condemned the Spectacles and ordered Reuchlin to hold his tongue. Reuchlin's own pen might be silenced, but the conflict grew to culminate in one of the most interesting and widely read humanist documents of the century. Reuchlin collected a series of testimonies to his personal character and scholarship, and published them under the title Letters from Eminent Men, the first of which was penned by Erasmus. The collection suggested to some clever humanist the idea of a collection of fictitious letters in which the obscurantists would be made to expose their own ignorance and confusion. The title would be Letters from Obscure Men.⁵² It was a fresh and original notion, and the young humanists of Germany released their pent-up bitterness and their long frustration upon the scholastics in a burst of nimble and coarse ridicule of the pedantry, casuistry, stupidity and antiquated notions of the traditionalists. The first series of letters numbered forty-one and appeared in 1515; two years later a series of seventy letters was published. The writers successfully lived up to their title, and kept their identity obscure. It is thought that Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubienus were the chief authors, and it is fairly certain that the humanist circle at Erfurt was deeply involved. The conservatives struggled as best they could with their ancient weapons, but imperial bans and the court of inquisition were of little avail against

⁵²Epistolae Obscurorum Vivorum -- Epistolae Illustrium Vivorum.

the obscure gentlemen who were causing Germany to roar with disconcerting laughter; once people begin to laugh at old traditions the halo of sacredness tarnishes quickly.

It seems, according to the Letters from Obscure Men, that a certain Magister Henricus Schaffsmulius, a scholastic scholar in Rome, writes home that he went one Friday morning to breakfast in Campo dei Fiori, and ordered an egg which, when opened, contained a chicken. "Quick," said his companion, "swallow it or the landlord will charge the chicken in the bill." The young priest obeyed, forgetting for the moment that the day was Friday and that he could eat no meat. One theologian suggested that there was no cause for concern, for an embryo chicken in an egg was exactly the same case as the worms or maggots in fruit or cheese, which men can eat without spiritual harm even during Lent. But another learned scholastic had told him that worms and maggots were to be classed as fish, which could be eaten on fast days, but that an embryo chicken was quite another matter, for it was meat. Would the learned Magister Ortuin, pleads Magister Schaffsmulius, decide the matter for him and put his soul at rest?

Magister Ortuin, to whom the Letters from Obscure Men are addressed, received little Latin poems from his students in Italy, who confess that their poems do not scan well, but that since their poems concern the lives of the saints there is no need for perfect verse. The writers of the letters confess also that their own lives are not what they should be in Italy, but Solomon and Samson were not perfect

either, and they have too much Christian humility to try to excel such honored patriarchs.

There is a great deal of sly gossip about the dreadful humanists in the letters. The correspondents do not like the sermons by men who have come under the humanist influence, for they are plain and simple, without a single syllogism; simple preaching about Christ and his salvation ought to be forbidden, they complain. It is suggested that Reuchlin may not be punished at all: it is rumored that the Inquisitor is running short of money for prosecuting the humanist, and that he has scarcely enough left for the necessary bribery at Rome; it is to be hoped that he will be able to secure some help for his finances.⁵³ It was a method of attack thoroughly suited to the German penchant for laughing at somebody else, but the Germans simultaneously felt sorry for the oppressions they themselves had borne at the hands of the papacy in Rome. In winning Reuchlin's case against Pfefferkorn by wit and laughter, the humanists had won for themselves a warm place in the hearts of the people, and with their lightness of heart had laid significant groundwork for serious criticisms of the church that the Reformation was to make almost immediately.

⁵³Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 72 ff.; Flick, op. cit., pp. 256 f.

C. Contributions to the Reformation

To the Reformation as a whole the Renaissance spirit, especially as translated and adapted by the German humanists, furnished both intellectual foundation and the assurance of popular support. These elements were subconscious with Martin Luther; it was Melanckthon, into whose pattern of thought all of these humanist strands had woven important concepts, who brought the Renaissance temper openly and honestly to the strengthening and enrichment of the Reformation consciousness. The New Theology of Martin Luther, which had grown out of the branching strand of the Renaissance represented in the Brethren of the Common Life and German mystical theology, was reunited to the basic implications of the intellectual Renaissance by the New Learning of which Melanckthon was an ideal type. The reunion gave promise of a broad religious understanding and educational program which, however, events were soon to force into discard: the mind of the sixteenth century could not sustain the brilliance of the insight that could, and did at first, come from the meeting of the minds and spirits of Luther and Melanckthon. Still, ✓ whether the Reformers could recognize the fact or not, the Reformation inherited a great deal from the Renaissance.

First, the Renaissance contributed to the Reformation an interest in origins and a respect for ancient standards which called into question the supreme validity of contemporary traditions. For the humanists this interest meant a

fantastic passion for the Greek and Latin classics, an enthusiasm which Melancthon had learned and which would reassert itself through him in the Reformation. For the religious reformers this spirit meant a devotion to the scriptures as the sole authority of faith, and a desire to restore the original form of Christianity untouched by the centuries of medieval encrustation.

Secondly, the humanists became trenchantly critical and skeptical of ecclesiastical institutions and practices, thus paving the way for the reformers who undertook to rid themselves of all ecclesiastical authority. The humanists were quite content to remain within the framework of medieval faith, but the reformers accepted the implications implicit in the criticism of the humanists and determined to build a totally new temple of faith, according to the original plans described in the New Testament.

Third, the Renaissance furnished the reformers with the tools of a free and independent scholarship.⁵⁴ The techniques of mastering both Greek and Hebrew languages were the fruit of Renaissance study, and the spirit of free inquiry with which to cut cleanly through the involved logic of scholasticism to new and fresh theological concepts was first explored by the humanist scholar. Circumstances forced the new Protestantism to depart radically from this principle

⁵⁴John Thomas McNeil, Matthew Spinka, Harold N. Willoughby (eds.), Environmental Factors in Christian History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), article by Winfred Ernest Garrison, "Renaissance Culture and Christianity," pp. 282-85.

almost before it was put into expression and it has taken religion fully three hundred years to recover the lost principle, but it was significant in the sixteenth century, for without it even Luther's mind could never have broken through the thick crust of medieval tradition.

Fourthly, the Renaissance raised a popular demand for learning and honest information that seemed insatiable and provided the Reformation with an indispensable condition for success. The mechanical answer was the production of books printed on paper from movable type in place of the old and imperfectly copied parchment manuscripts. Under Cosimo de' Medici forty-five copyists labored two years to produce two hundred volumes; by 1500 there were in Europe at least nine million books of thirty thousand titles, and over a thousand printers daily laboring to increase the unprecedented volume.⁵⁵ Europe literally devoured both the books and the information contained in them. For the first time in history it became worth while to learn to read, and libraries could contain a wide variety of works on all subjects. The price of books fell to less than an eighth of the former cost.

⁵⁵Bendall, op. cit., p. 119: the first surviving specimen of printing was printed at Mainz on the upper Rhine before 1447; three years later Gutenberg and Fust set up a partnership there and produced the famous forty-two line Bible and the thirty-two line Latin grammar of Donatus. By 1465 the press had reached Italy, where German printers continued to be leaders in the art for many years; by 1470 presses were set up in Paris; London followed in 1480, while Spain characteristically lagged behind until 1499. By 1500 all the chief countries of Europe were provided with the means for the rapid multiplication of books.

New ideas became the common property of everyone who could read, and though the church soon attempted to control the new force by censorship, the printing press had made it impossible for any institution ever again to be mistress of the minds of men. The effort, even though temporarily successful, from that time was one from which success was precluded, for this growing knowledge made men feel that they were no longer so dependent upon authority, and led to an increased exercise of private judgment.

Fifth, the Renaissance opened for the common man the possibility of an honest appreciation of the real world about him. Though he was rejected by most of the early Reformation leaders, Copernicus prepared the way for the intellectual conquest of the universe, and on the doctrine of the infinity of the world Giordano Bruno based his equation between God and nature.⁵⁶ At last men were freed to recognize with all honesty the freedom of secular from ecclesiastical authority as a reality already accomplished but generally obscured by the false piety of both princes and prelates. Even the Reformation recognized that the earthly life could be wholesome by repudiating saintly idleness as practiced in the monasteries and by exalting man's worldly vocation and married life. Though not accepted in its extreme and libertarian forms, the Renaissance contributed to the Reformation an enjoyment of common life that radically changed both life and

⁵⁶Friedrich Paulsen, German Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 44.

religion from its other-worldly, medieval form.

The ties between the Renaissance and the Reformation are strong though tenuous, but they were not woven into the new movement by Luther himself. Luther was right when he said that he had hatched the egg laid by Erasmus, but Erasmus was also right when he replied that he had laid only a hen's egg while Luther had hatched out a game cock. At first the German humanists thought that perhaps Luther was one of their own number differing only in his religious sensitiveness, but Luther was never a professed humanist, and did not come to his religious views through the humanist approach. While he read the classics at Erfurt, and in his student days was known as "the Philosopher," Luther's concern was always religious rather than cultural, and he came to his New Theology through a spiritual not a rational battle. He supported Reuchlin in the Pfefferkorn dispute, and used the tools of language and scholarship furnished by the humanist scholars, but always remained distrustful of human reason, and fundamental to his entire conception of faith and salvation was his conviction of the absolute inadequacy of mankind either by an act of the will or exertion of the intellect to achieve anything apart from the will of God. His discovery was a New Theology, not a New Learning, and both his purpose and his method were the antithesis of the culture and reason of the humanists. In an important sense the humanist interest was to Martin Luther totally irrelevant: "It seems to me that a man is not necessarily a truly wise Christian because he

knows Greek and Hebrew," he said, "since even St. Jerome who knew five languages is not equal to Augustine, who knew but one, though it may seem far otherwise to Erasmus."⁵⁷

It was Philip Melanchthon, the only humanist with whom Luther ever came to terms, who brought the fruits of the New Learning to the Reformation.⁵⁸ Personally instructed by the great Reuchlin, trained at the humanist university of Tübingen where his genius found full scope for its wide curiosity, Melanchthon was representative of the best of German humanism. But, as the events that follow unhappily reveal, Melanchthon was a product, not an original or creative spirit, and though he brought to Wittenberg the scholarship of Greek and Hebrew the Reformation desperately needed for independence of thought, he brought also a brilliant, impatient and narrow

⁵⁷Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. I, p. 254.

⁵⁸Hill, op. cit., pp. 8 f. I think Hill's rhapsody over Melanchthon and his designation of him as "the Universal Standard Bearer of the Protestant Revolt" is uncritical:

It is indeed refreshing to know that amidst the vain and empty disquisitions of the Roman theologians, in perhaps the darkest period in the history of the Church, when the vagaries of Rome had carried men's spirits off into the theological slough of despond; at a time when the darkness of scholasticism had bequeathed to the sixteenth century its offspring of mental chaos and spiritual night in the forms of papal indulgences, traditionalism, legalistic work - righteousness and general obscurantism of the New Testament principles, some were found nestled in the bosom of the true church who held the truth which is according to godliness and the godliness which is according to truth. Of such was Melanchthon. We meet in him a sweetness, a pureness, a ray of spiritual light unheard of before in the whole of doctrinal theology.

Franz Hildebrandt (Melanchthon: Alien or Ally? [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946]) is totally critical, and succeeds in posing his title question without suggesting an answer.

mind, the "thin white light" of the scholar's passion, and the aridity of textual criticism. It was Melanchthon who doomed Protestantism to generations of schooling in the polished and shallow literature of Rome, to a formal and barren preoccupation with the dry bones of language, with imitation of style without attention to content, and the re-creation of a narrow, scholastic concentration on orthodoxy that obscured any sensitiveness to the impelling implications of the first creative insights of the Reformation. Perhaps it was not the fault of Luther, who burned his spirit out in impassioned fear during the Peasants' Revolt. Perhaps it was not the fault of Melanchthon, whom nature endowed liberally with brilliance but who never possessed the creative ability to synthesize Reformation and Renaissance. Perhaps it was the fault of the age and the people, who were still struggling with inbred medievalism. But at first it seemed, when Melanchthon came to Wittenberg in 1518, that the miracle might come to pass.

3. Melanchthon at Wittenberg

Master Philip Melanchthon and Doctor Martin Luther rapidly became the closest of friends, and the difficulties everyone had feared might arise with the coming of the famous and brilliant young scholar failed completely to materialize. The two were constantly together, and with Luther towering over the slender young professor, and often listening

to him as they walked through the Wittenberg streets, a picture of friendship and mutual respect was animated for the citizens, who loved to point out the two celebrities to visitors in town. Melanchthon nearly revered his older colleague, and learned from him as no other man was ever to do, the personal basis of Luther's New Theology. Luther had been teaching in his independent, fiery way, and now Melanchthon began to lead him to the original sources of theology and philosophical statement. Luther attended Melanchthon's classes frequently, and he was known to have said,

Whoever does not recognize Philip as his instructor is a stolid, stupid donkey, carried away by his own vanity and self-conceit. Whatever we know in the arts and in true philosophy, Philip has taught us. He has only the humble title of Master, but he exceeds all the Doctors. There is no one living adorned with such gifts. He must be held in honor. Whoever despises this man, him will God despise.⁵⁹

Luther possessed a quality of originality and conviction that Melanchthon never ceased to admire and was quite lacking in his own personality. "Martin is too great and too wonderful for words," Melanchthon wrote to a friend. "You know with what astonishment Alcibiades regarded Socrates. Much in the same way, but in a Christian sense, I regard Martin. The more I contemplate him, the greater I judge him to be."⁶⁰ Each of these two represented a superlative quality unknown before to the other; it was a combination of opposite qualities that would inevitably result either in violent antagonism

⁵⁹Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 302.

⁶⁰Ibid., Vol. I, p. 264.

or unbounded mutual trust.

Melanchthon plunged into his new work with a vigor that would have done honor to Luther himself. In 1518 he edited and published the Epistle to Titus, and prepared for publication a Greek dictionary, two treatises of Plutarch, a Greek hymn, the works of Athenagoras, Plato's Symposium and three books of rhetoric.⁶¹ Meanwhile the attendance at his lectures doubled at the beginning of the second semester, in 1519 he attracted 250 students, in the summer of 1520 there were 330, and in the fall semester of the same year six hundred students attended one of Melanchthon's courses.⁶² In 1519 Luther wrote that Philip was lecturing on Matthew, and observed:

I am sorry that I cannot send all the brethren to Philip's theological lectures on Matthew at six o'clock in the morning. The little Grecian surpasses me also in theology.⁶³

A few years later, when Melanchthon's fame was at its height, Spalatin wrote:

Sometimes he had nearly two thousand hearers, among whom were princes, counts, barons, and other persons of rank. He taught over a wide range of subjects, including Hebrew, Latin and Greek grammar, rhetoric, physics, and philosophy; thus serving the common weal of Church and State, and in teaching accomplishing as much in all his subjects as other professors did in one subject.⁶⁴

⁶¹Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 44, 50, 52.

⁶²Richard, op. cit., p. 44.

⁶³Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁴Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 301.

During the summer of 1519 Melanchthon wrote a series of theses for academic discussion and on September 19 was granted the degree, Bachelor of Theology. The theses show how strongly Luther had already influenced Melanchthon in less than a year of association at Wittenberg, for in them Melanchthon begins with the assumption that justification takes place through faith and proceeds through the argument that love is the work of faith to the conclusion that because love necessarily follows faith, faith and love are works of God rather than of nature. Since this is all that is required for salvation as administered by the church, satisfaction is not a part of penance, he maintained, and there is no external sacrifice in Christianity; therefore the mass is not a work of salvation and is, like baptism, only of benefit to the individual who receives it: the mass and baptism remain sacramental signs by which the Lord witnesses that he will pardon sins, but there is no miracle, no sacrifice worked by them alone. Melanchthon further argued that the keys of the kingdom are given to all Christians alike, and not to the pope alone, and that the scholastic Aristotelian notion of blessedness agrees neither with Christian teaching nor the common sense of man.⁶⁵ Luther was delighted with the sophisticated style and smooth argument of the theses, and wrote to his aged friend von Staupitz:

⁶⁵ Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 126.

You have seen, or will see, Philip's theses. They are bold, but they are certainly true. He defended them in such a way that he seemed to all a veritable wonder, and such he is. Christ willing, he will surpass many Martins and will be a mightier foe of the devil and of the scholastic theology. He knows their tricks, and also the Rock Christ. He will powerfully prevail.⁶⁶

At the time of his graduation, Melanchthon pointedly discussed the authority of Scripture, maintaining that the Christian needed no articles of faith except those supplied by the Bible, and that even the authority of the Councils was inferior to that of Scripture; his conclusion was that it therefore could not be heresy not to believe in "transubstantiation and the like."⁶⁷

Melanchthon consistently refused to accept a doctorate in theology, and to be ordained to the ministry: he was convinced that his vocation was teaching and not theology, though he preached regularly in Latin in his lecture room on Sundays for the students at Wittenberg who could not understand the German of Luther. He lectured on some New Testament books, but most of his time he chose to be offering courses in ethics, logic, Greek grammar and the classical literature. During the academic year of 1519 to 1520 he wrote two theses on the doctrines of Paul, a handbook of dialectics, began a commentary on Matthew, published a Greek text of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and planned a new

⁶⁶quoted by Richard (op. cit., p. 61).

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 59. The address is in the Corpus Reformatorum, Vol. I, pp. 138 ff.

edition of his Greek grammar. His works, covering an amazing variety of subjects, fill twenty-eight large volumes of the Corpus Reformatorum, and his Theological Commonplaces became the textbook of theology for all Lutheran universities in the latter part of the century, much as the Sentences of Peter Lombard had been used in the Middle Ages. He was always the most popular lecturer at the university in Wittenberg, men listened to his teaching who later wrought tremendous influence upon the future of Protestantism: Joachim Camerarius, Valentine Trotzendorf, Michael Neander.

It would necessarily be an important event to break the routine of labor and lecture that Melanchthon was maintaining, so when students discovered a notice posted on the bulletin board outside his lecture hall on November 25, 1520, they knew that it was a significant day for the professor:

A studiis hodie facti otia grata Philippus,
Nec verbis Pauli dogmata assera leget.

"Rest from your studies, Philip says you may," read the notice, "He'll read no lecture on St. Paul today." It was his wedding day.

Melanchthon's friends, especially Doctor Luther, had urged the move. Luther said that he needed someone "to care for his weak body." "I am robbing myself of study and of pleasure in order to follow the counsel and subserve the pleasure of others," said Melanchthon himself,⁶⁸ and it was

⁶⁸Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 265.

with a great deal of reluctance that he became a married man. Katherine Krapp, daughter of the mayor of Wittenberg, made Melanchthon's home an important part of his academic life. Students were always welcome there, and frequently the family table was surrounded at mealtime by foreign students who found Melanchthon's perfect Latin the only language in Wittenberg they could understand. Camerarius, one of Melanchthon's students, wrote that

it was a part of Melanchthon's household arrangements, never to deny himself to anyone. Many came to him for letters of recommendation; many for him to revise their essays. Some sought his counsel in their embarrassments, others told him of incidents that had befallen them, either in private or in public, provided there were such as merited his attention; others again brought this or that complaint before him.⁶⁹

The house into which Melanchthon moved Katherine was a tall and forbidding one on the street side, but in back there was a garden with a short path that led directly into the garden behind the house in which Luther lived. There was a spring there, too, which Melanchthon converted into a well, and a pear tree under which Luther, Melanchthon and others would sit and talk on summer evenings. For several years Luther and Melanchthon seemed to grow more and more dependent upon each other. They were strangely different personalities to be drawn so closely together. Melanchthon was from southern Germany, from the well-to-do middle class of citizens and artisans, and had come through a quiet

⁶⁹ von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 152 f.

literary and humanistic preparation to a maturity of scholarship, order, and cultural sensitivity. Luther was from northern Germany, a son of peasants, who had fought his way to fame and influence through the trial of personal struggle and emerged a popular leader of the people bubbling over with popular eloquence, natural wit and humor, intrepid courage, and brutal honesty. In the charged atmosphere of Wittenberg and the excitement of the sweeping popularity of the Reformation, these two stood together. When Luther threw the papal bull into the flames at Wittenberg on November 11th, two weeks before Melanchthon was married, Philip was in the cheering circle about the people's hero. When Luther published the stirring Address to the Christian Nobility Melanchthon said, "The purpose of writing the letter to the German nobility I approved from the beginning."⁷⁰ In February of 1521 Melanchthon published an answer to the Oration of Thomas Rhadinus against the Heretic Martin Luther, Who Is Destroying the Glory of the German Nation. In many ways Melanchthon's long answer is the scholar's version of Luther's three Reformation documents. When Luther was on his way to Worms to defend himself before the emperor, the theological faculty at Paris issued an attack upon Luther entitled Determination on the Lutheran Doctrine, labeling the Reformer an arch-heretic, a renewer of ancient heresies, the enemy of Christ, an execrable restorer of old blasphemies. The

⁷⁰Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 211.

Determination was a dogmatic tirade in which twenty-four of Luther's doctrines are condemned, and declared false, schismatic and impious upon no other authority than that of the University of Paris. Eck gleefully translated the tract into German and circulated it among the people. In Luther's absence, Melanchthon rose to his friend's defense with a penetrating sarcasm that only a master of medieval dialectic and Latin style could produce. It is regrettable, sighs Melanchthon, that the famous Christian doctors of the famous university at Paris have been replaced by mere calumnists:

It is evident that a profane Scholasticism has sprung up at Paris, which is called theology, but which leaves nothing salutary to the Church. The Gospel is obscured; faith is extinguished; a doctrine of works is introduced; instead of a Christian people we are a people not subject to law but to the ethics of Aristotle, and instead of Christianity, a kind of philosophical mode of life has been introduced in opposition to the whole mind of the Spirit.⁷¹

"The Sorbonnists blame Luther because he has not followed the Church," concluded Melanchthon. "What do you call the Church," he challenged them, "the French Sorbonne?"

But it was not safe for Luther to return to Wittenberg from Worms, despite the assurance of the emperor of safe conduct, and the Reformer was whisked off to the castle of the Wartburg until the tempers of high churchmen could cool. At Wittenberg the spirit of the Reformation was beginning to become revolutionary, and Melanchthon, left behind

⁷¹"Apology for Luther against the Furious Decree of the Parisian Theologasters," Corpus Reformatorum, Vol. I, pp. 398 ff.

to cope with problems at home in Luther's absence, was a man of culture and order who believed implicitly in the wisdom of man's enlightened mind. The growth of radical notions made it clear that if men were to interpret the Bible for themselves they must have the Bible in their hands for continual study. Melanchthon had already pled with Luther to translate the Bible into German, and now with tensions mounting Melanchthon insisted that Dr. Martin begin the task at once. The "imprisonment" at Wartburg furnished an opportunity that might never otherwise have been Luther's, and he plunged into the task with all the zeal and understanding at his command. When he returned to Wittenberg in the spring of 1521 he brought the finished draft with him, and he and Melanchthon at once began the revision. By September 21st an edition of three thousand copies was printed; in two months the edition was sold out, and in December another edition was released. The stormclouds of radicalism and anarchy were already lowering heavily on the horizon as Melanchthon and Luther made their grand attempt to give the Reformation to the people. But the spirits of men had already been freed and men are prone to listen to those who promise good from rebellion and security from anarchy. The real charter of the Reformation, the Scriptures in the common language, had come too late. Or perhaps the Reformation had come too early. Everyone was not a Luther or a Melanchthon with profound religious experience or inbred culture; the people had not been prepared for an understanding of the religious principles of

The first part of the paper discusses the general principles of the theory of the atom. It is shown that the atom is a system of particles, which are in a state of motion. The motion of the particles is determined by the forces acting on them. The forces are of two kinds: attractive and repulsive. The attractive forces are due to the electric and magnetic fields of the particles. The repulsive forces are due to the Pauli exclusion principle. The motion of the particles is described by the Schrödinger equation. The solutions of the Schrödinger equation are the wave functions of the atom. The wave functions are used to calculate the probabilities of finding the particles in different states. The probabilities are given by the squares of the absolute values of the wave functions. The wave functions are also used to calculate the energy levels of the atom. The energy levels are given by the eigenvalues of the Hamiltonian operator. The energy levels are discrete, which means that the energy of the atom can only take certain values. This is the origin of the quantization of energy.



A hand-drawn diagram of a parabolic curve opening upwards, representing a potential well. The curve is drawn with a pencil on a piece of paper. The curve starts at a point on the left, goes down to a minimum, and then goes back up to a point on the right. The curve is smooth and continuous.

The second part of the paper discusses the application of the theory of the atom to the study of the properties of matter. It is shown that the properties of matter are determined by the arrangement of the atoms in the material. The arrangement of the atoms is determined by the forces acting on them. The forces are of two kinds: attractive and repulsive. The attractive forces are due to the electric and magnetic fields of the atoms. The repulsive forces are due to the Pauli exclusion principle. The arrangement of the atoms is described by the lattice theory. The lattice theory is a model of the arrangement of the atoms in a crystal. The atoms are represented by points in a regular grid. The forces between the atoms are represented by springs. The lattice theory is used to calculate the properties of the crystal, such as its density, its heat capacity, and its electrical conductivity. The lattice theory is also used to calculate the properties of the liquid and the gas. The lattice theory is a very important tool in the study of the properties of matter. It has been used to calculate the properties of many different materials, and it has been found that the lattice theory is in good agreement with experiment. The lattice theory is also used to study the properties of the solid solution. The solid solution is a mixture of two or more different materials. The lattice theory is used to calculate the properties of the solid solution, such as its density, its heat capacity, and its electrical conductivity. The lattice theory is a very important tool in the study of the properties of matter. It has been used to calculate the properties of many different materials, and it has been found that the lattice theory is in good agreement with experiment. The lattice theory is also used to study the properties of the solid solution. The solid solution is a mixture of two or more different materials. The lattice theory is used to calculate the properties of the solid solution, such as its density, its heat capacity, and its electrical conductivity.

the Reformation, and they grasped only its superficial social and economic implications. The clouds of violence were gathering, and another thunderbolt was about to crash into the forest, profoundly altering Martin Luther and bringing Philip Melanchthon into predominance.

CHAPTER VIII

TRIAL BY CRISIS

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CHAPTER VIII

TRIAL BY CRISIS

1. Gathering Tensions

When Martin Luther burned the papal bull in 1520, he flung the Book of Canon Law into the flames with it. Caught up by his own daring and the enthusiasm of his students gathered about him in the flickering firelight, he involuntarily consigned the ecclesiastical law to the flames, saying, "Because thou hast troubled the saints of the Lord, so consume thee eternal fire."¹

The act was both symbolic and prophetic. It was symbolic of the spontaneous excesses of action and expression to which moments of enthusiasm and depression could carry the men of the Reformation, especially Martin Luther. It was prophetic of the troubled future. Events were to break the life of Martin Luther in two, and from them he was to emerge thoroughly conservative, the saturnine figure of a reformer whom fate had changed into an unwilling radical. The Wittenberg professor perhaps never saw the full implications of his New Theology, but others who were far more intimately

¹George H. Dryer, History of the Christian Church (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903), Vol. III, p. 134.

concerned with the problems of the common life understood almost at once that he had taken away from the church its authority, and had placed it solidly in the mind and heart of the individual. Those who waited eagerly for this sort of principle did not hesitate to carry it to practical application.

The lot of peasants in medieval Europe had never been a pleasant one. Oppressed by princes, knights, burghers and the church, they felt themselves without friends on earth, and sometimes had been bold enough to speak for themselves. They were ready followers for all religious reformers, such as Wyclif and Huss, and often they proved a source of embarrassment to them because of the anarchy inherent in their radical views. During the fifteenth century the position of the peasants grew steadily worse. Increased living costs did not improve their situation, while in the towns luxuries became more common. The country was treated as a colonial area by the town guilds, who attempted to create monopolies of production and trade, and the peasants, always badly organized, had no answer to this exploitation except suppressed discontent. Since the rights of the peasants were mainly unwritten, handed down by oral tradition, they were easily overridden by the bold and unscrupulous lords.

In the towns, too, there was discontent. Division of labor made mastership increasingly difficult to attain, and a large class of oppressed workers had come into existence, men who were never permitted to work themselves up out of the

apprentice or journeyman class, whatever their skill. Both peasants and town workers had come to feel that they were being gradually forced to resort to violent methods if they wished to gain justice. It takes time to convince people that they must struggle for their rights, but the time had passed and the conviction was formed.

During the last quarter of the fifteenth century a large part of southern and western Germany had begun to seethe with the revolutionary spirit. By 1493 a secret society was actively stirring up discontent in the Hengersberg area near Schettstadt, and another was busy at Untergromback in the bishopric of Spire in 1502. In 1512 the village of Lehen near Friburg was the center of a people's disturbance, about the same time the peasants of Wurtemberg united themselves in the society of the "Poor Conrad," and in 1517 Baden and Alsace were almost ready for open revolution.²

There were individual prophets of revolution, of course. John Behem, a strolling drummer and piper, was told by a vision at the shrine of the Virgin at Niklashausen to burn his drum and bagpipes and become a preacher. John was illiterate and ignorant, and apparently drew his gospel from the revolutionary talk he had heard among the peasants for whom he had played for years, and his preaching became a mixture of religious reform and inflammatory political propaganda. All men, he proclaimed to the open-mouthed

²James Mackinnon, *The Origins of the Reformation* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939), p. 301.

peasants, should be free and equal. Even the pope, emperor, baron, bishop and prince should have no more property than the common folk and should be forced to work like everyone else for an honest day's pay. The peasants literally devoured the new gospel of equality. All of the economic marks of class privilege should be done away with, John continued: fish and game should be free to all; tolls, rents, taxes and tithes should be eliminated; and the inordinate wealth of the degenerate clergy should be reapportioned among the people who deserved to hold it. Thousands flocked to have their long-standing wounds licked by the impassioned preacher at Micklashausen. At last John called upon his hearers to seize their arms and march upon entrenched privilege in force, but the Bishop of Wurtzburg quickly intervened and John Behem was burned as a heretic in 1475.³

The pattern of preaching and revolt occurred again and again in southern Germany during the early years of the sixteenth century. A leader would appear who called the peasants to an armed rendezvous to begin open revolution, but at the decisive moment something would go wrong: the Swiss, to whom the peasants always looked for help, would fail to move; or someone would warn the princes, who would swoop down with their knights on the farmers and shepherds and cruelly seize and torture them. The full-scale uprisings of which the peasants dreamed never even got under way. All

³C. Ullmann, Reformers before the Reformation (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1935), Vol. I, pp. 335 f.

of society was in a perpetual state of near-anarchy. Robber knights ambushed traders and common folk on the roads. The reign of Frederick III as emperor, the longest and most uneventful reign in German history, had set a precedent for irresponsibility by the central government, and local barons and counts became individual monarchs whose law depended solely upon the use of force. All of Germany was on the brink of widespread popular revolt against all existing social, political and economic conditions. Martin Luther's dramatic challenge of the authority of Rome and his eloquent plea for the liberty of the Christian man was the call to action for which a turbulent peasantry had been waiting. Luther himself had not seen the wider social and economic implications of his New Theology; the people recognized only these and missed the profound religious significance of Luther's doctrine. It was a charged atmosphere that a single spark of overt friction would ignite into blazing violence: Luther had involuntarily provided the anarchists with the religious sanction for their ambitions.

In July of 1520 some of the students at Wittenberg staged a minor riot in the town, tossing ripe fruit at some of the burghers and damaging some private property about the city, and the townspeople, fearing that much worse might happen, spread the report that the students had threatened to burn the town. Luther afterwards recognized that these were little more than the exuberant pranks of boyish students, but at the time he felt impelled to preach against "tumult

and disturbance."⁴ On Christmas Eve of 1521 an excited crowd invaded the church at Wittenberg and tore the pictures from the walls of the chapel and burned them.⁵ During a secret three-day visit to Wittenberg from his concealment in the Wartburg castle a few weeks before, Luther had sensed the unrest that had grown in his absence. Already several priests had ventured to marry, and Professor Carlstadt had published a book attacking both the concept of clerical celibacy and the legitimacy of monastic vows. From the isolation of his castle retreat at the Wartburg, Luther had agreed with Carlstadt, and wrote a pamphlet proving that the vow to monasticism was a false one and was therefore not binding upon anyone who had accepted it. In Wittenberg two monks immediately took action, leaving the convent and renouncing their monastic vows. One of them was Gabriel Zwilling, a fiery and eloquent person, who teamed with Professor Carlstadt to develop a number of radical ideas: complete freedom for the individual in all matters of religion and morals, and thoroughgoing communism of wealth were among their tenets, and their preaching soon aroused public disturbances.⁶ The isolation of the Wartburg was beginning to weigh heavily upon

⁴Martin Luther, *Works* (Philadelphia: Holman Company, 1916-1932), Vol. II, p. 203: "An Earnest Exhortation for All Christians, Warning Them against Insurrection and Rebellion."

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 388: introduction to the Eight Wittenberg Sermons, Lent, 1522.

⁶Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Martin Luther* (New York: The Century Company, 1912), pp. 228 ff.

Luther as these problems grew larger and the letters from Melanchthon began to reflect the younger man's distress with violence and uncouth radicalism. It was not long before Luther's restless spirit broke forth in a vigorous tract of sharp warning: A Faithful Exhortation for All Christians to Shun Riot and Rebellion. Changes, he insisted, must always be made in an orderly fashion, and there is no excuse for riot and uproar among Christian people. It is clearly the work of the devil who is trying to discredit the new movement:

Now it seems possible that there is danger of an insurrection, and that priests, monks, bishops and the entire spiritual state may be murdered or driven into exile, unless they seriously and thoroughly reform themselves. For the common man has been brooding over the injury he has received in property, in body and in soul, and has become provoked. They have tried him too far and have most unscrupulously burdened him beyond measure. He is neither able nor willing to endure it any longer, and would indeed have good reason to lay about him with flails and cudgels as the peasants are threatening to do.⁷

The leaders of the radical parties read these remarks of Luther's happily, and ignored his passages of caution. The Doctor of Doctors had told them that they had "good reason to lay about them with flails and cudgels!" Luther, however, had no thought that they would by-pass his statements of constraint. That he did not estimate their enthusiasm correctly indicated how little he sensed the dynamic practical implications of his doctrines when they were applied to

⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 206.

everyday problems. The radicals hardly read Luther's words,

Insurrection is an unprofitable method of procedure, and never results in the desired reformation. For insurrection is devoid of reason and generally hurts the innocent more than the guilty ... Keep your eye fixed on the authorities therefore. As long as they do nothing and give no command, do you keep quiet your hand, your mouth and your heart, and assume no responsibility.⁸

In the Wartburg retreat Luther seemed convinced that the troubles at Wittenberg were but temporary outbursts, and he could honestly calm the authorities of the town: "They may use violence against some," he said, "but there will be no general use of violence."⁹ ... The words and edicts of the priests will more than suffice in dealing with them; there is no need of more material weapons."¹⁰

But the situation continued to grow more tense. Only a few days after Luther's secret visit to Wittenberg in December fanatical preachers of rebellion came to the university village from Zwickau, a Saxon town eighty miles south of Wittenberg, and began to announce a gospel for which they claimed supernatural illumination: the existing arrangements

⁸Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, pp. 211 f.

⁹Ibid., p. 209. Luther also added, "God's purposes demand far more than an insurrection. As a whole they are beyond the reach of help." Several paragraphs later he said: "What is done by constituted authority cannot be regarded as rebellion ... But the mind of the common man we must calm, and tell him to give way not even to the passions and words which lead to insurrection, and to do nothing at all unless commanded to do so by his superiors or assured of the cooperation of the authorities."

¹⁰Ibid., p. 211.

of society must be completely overturned, they cried, all social distinctions should be erased, manual labor alone could be called legitimate, education was a waste of time, and revelation, which seemed usually to be given to the ignorant and uneducated, was to be the sole guide of life.¹¹ Carlstadt and some of the other city and university leaders were completely carried away by the new doctrine, even Melancthon was impressed, and the emphasis on spirit as over against the reliability of the mind caused the university to lose many of its best students. Though the leaders of the radical movement were men of piety and above moral reproach, it was clear that the new doctrines were endangering the life of the city and the entire future of the Reformation. Luther wrote to Wittenberg in January urging caution, and the town council replied by urging Luther to return home at once. From the Wartburg Luther wrote to the elector for permission to leave his place of concealment, and though the prince firmly refused to grant the permission, Luther arrived in Wittenberg on March 6, 1522, and at once took personal command of a situation that was threatening to break out of control.

During the Lenten season of 1522, Luther preached a series of eight sermons at Wittenberg. The tension was not lessening, and he reiterated the principles of his earnest Exhortation, bringing frankness, vigor and great common sense

¹¹McCiffert, op. cit., p. 231.

to bear upon the excited spirits of the townsfolk and their leaders. By the Word of God alone can superstition be overcome and the old system reformed, he counselled. Liberty is not an end in itself, but merely the means to the higher end of service, and the Christian practice of faith and love. Moderation was the keynote of the sermons: "One must not insist upon his rights, but must see what may be useful and helpful to his brothers."¹² In his second sermon he spoke of the Roman methods of conducting mass, and though he maintained that it should be preached and taught with tongue and pen that to hold mass in such a manner is sin, "no one should be dragged away from it by force."¹³ ... I will preach it, write it, teach it," he concluded, "but I will constrain no man by force, for faith must come freely without compulsion."¹⁴ On the third day he continued, "But no one shall be dragged [to services] by the hair, or kept from them by force, for I can drive no man to heaven with a club."¹⁵ The fundamental principles of individual freedom and personal dignity enunciated by Luther as academic conclusions two years before at the beginning of the Reformation had been subjected to the testing fire of radical misunderstanding and had been restated with new courage and conviction. Practical problems had forced the clarification of basic issues, and Luther had

¹²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 393.

¹³Ibid., p. 397.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 399.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 401.

continued to take his stand in the gospel of freedom. The people of Wittenberg soon recognized the wisdom and reliability of their old hero, calm was restored, many of the old forms were restored to the church, and early in May Luther could write, "There is nothing here but love and friendship."¹⁶

2. Educational Depression

The general unrest and widespread insecurity, however, had penetrated far deeper into the Reformation principles than even Luther had realized, for the conflict with the extremists in Wittenberg had included cultural issues as well as religious and political. Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon had always spoken as intelligent and educated men, and had always assumed that they were speaking to the minds as well as the hearts of others, but the emphasis of the New Theology on blind faith as the condition of salvation, and the supreme value of the Word of God as the only norm of truth, the insistence on the right of the individual to judge doctrine, the persistent distrust of the scholastic educational method and all the achievements of human reason which it claimed to foster, tended to encourage men of less wisdom to hold all culture in contempt. Professor Carlstadt pointed out the command of Matthew 23:8 to call no man master, and tried to convince the university faculty to cease the

¹⁶McGiffert, op. cit., p. 246.

promotion of candidates to theological degrees; all men should remain equal, he insisted, and began to turn to laymen for inspired interpretation of the Scriptures. At Erfurt university students began to claim that a study of Latin and Greek was superfluous for an understanding of the Bible, and at Nurnberg, Basel and Strassburg the denunciation of education found impassioned spokesmen. "Good God," wrote Melanchthon in April of 1523, "how preposterously do these theologize who wish to show their wisdom solely by their contempt of these good things! What is this error but a new species of sophistry?"¹⁷ The new contempt of education and all cultural interests was spreading "like an infectious disease," said Melanchthon, not only among the ministers, but among professors of law and medicine. In 1521, five hundred and seventy-nine students registered at the university in Wittenberg; in the next year the matriculation had fallen to two hundred and forty-five, and early in 1525 the student body numbered less than two hundred.¹⁸ The weight of the popular disregard for educational effort was not only felt at Wittenberg: the student body at Leipzig dropped nearly seventy per cent, at Cologne the registrations fell from two hundred and fifty to one hundred and twenty, at Freiburg twenty-two students remained from an earlier average of two

¹⁷Philip Melanthonis, *Opera* (Halis and Brunswig: C. A. Schietschke and Sons, 1834-1850), Vol. I, p. 613.

¹⁸James Mackinnon, *Luther and the Reformation* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925), Vol. III, p. 213.

hundred. In 1526 only nine students matriculated at Postock compared with one hundred and eighteen in 1521, and teaching was suspended completely at Griefswald from 1524 to 1539 for a lack of students.¹⁹

All of the responsibility for this ominous depression of learning and education cannot be placed directly upon the implications of the New Theology, for there were also important economic factors operative in the decline. Of direct significance was the changed attitude toward labor that the Reformation had brought about. Begging had always been an accepted means of support for a student in the Middle Ages, but the effect of the evangelical movement had been to point shame at any beggar. Similarly, the Reformation had eliminated the whole lucrative area of benefices and clerical appointments at the hands of the Roman church for its theological students, and the possibilities of securing a position where one might put his training to use became steadily less and less. Economic conditions were changing generally, and a more materialistic and practical view of life was rapidly becoming prevalent. Martin Bucer was shocked that young men were becoming far more concerned with earning money than training the spirit:

Nobody will learn anything nowadays except what brings in money. All the world is running after those trades and occupations which give least work to do and bring the most gain, without any concern

¹⁹Mackinnon, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 213.

for their neighbor or for honest and good report. The study of the arts and sciences is set aside for the barest kinds of manual work ... All the clever heads which have been endowed by God with capacity for nobler studies are engrossed by commerce.²⁰

It was becoming increasingly clear that principles of the Reformation were having an ominously negative effect on the attitude of the people toward the schools. It was also becoming clear that unless the current direction of events were changed soon the very future of the Reformation itself was in serious jeopardy. How were men to read the Scriptures wisely if they were not instructed? And how was the life of the Reformation to be continued if there were not ministers being trained for the pulpits who understood the evangelical doctrines? Immediate action was becoming imperative if the existence of the Reformation were to be guaranteed beyond the first generation of Reformers who had been trained in Catholic schools.

Luther's first idea on returning to Wittenberg from the Wartburg was to strengthen the university by devoting the time of its most popular and talented professor solely to theology. "How I wish that Philip be relieved from grammar," he wrote to Spalatin early in July, "that he may devote himself to theology."²¹ Melancthon, however, resisted the

²⁰Quoted by Mackinnon (op. cit., Vol. III, p. 214).

²¹Quoted by James William Richard in Philip Melancthon (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), p. 109.

suggestion. His interests lay with the classics and with younger men, and since 1519 he had maintained in his own home a private school in which boys were prepared for university study, and in 1522 he had written a Latin grammar expressly for these pupils. It was an interesting and significant experiment that Melanchthon conducted in his home through these busy years, for it not only revealed the direction in which his heart instinctively turned but was the laboratory in which he worked out principles which were later to influence all Protestantism. The classics were the basis of the curriculum, and Latin its common-core. The students wrote essays and composed Latin verses, and Melanchthon crowned the best author with a wreath of ivy and wrote festive poems honoring outstanding students. The highest scholar was put in charge of the others as a reward for his diligence, and was known by his classmates as the "House King." Dialogues and comedies from Seneca, Plautus and Terence were memorized and produced to give the youthful students proficiency in Latin. This was the busy and productive scene from which Luther wished to take Melanchthon, and Melanchthon resisted. In 1522 he wrote to Spalatin:

I hear that Dr. Martin wants me to commit the Greek teaching to another. This I do not wish to do. I would rather discontinue theology, which, according to custom, I began to teach on account of the bachelor's degree. Hitherto my work was only a substitute for that of Martin, when he was absent or otherwise engaged. I see the need of many earnest teachers of the classics, which at present,

not less than in the age of sophistry, are neglected.²²

Melanchthon felt that a cultural background of the classics was a necessity for the successful pastor in the evangelical faith, and as Luther pressed the issue, the profound difference between them in background and attitude became increasingly evident: Luther was interested in giving the theological doctrines to pastors and preachers and thus preserving the gains of the Reformation; Melanchthon, more of a dreamer and always a classical humanist, insisted on the achievement of classical Latin style and an acquaintance with the ancients as a primary goal. Melanchthon never reached a certainty of opinion regarding the method for insuring the continuation of evangelical doctrine; Luther never really meant that the New Theology should be entrusted to the individual layman. Neither ever understood that the basic principle of the Reformation demanded that the individual member of the evangelical congregation be sufficiently trained so that he could give honest and intelligent assent to its religious doctrines.

"It is a very bad condition of affairs that in so large a number of professors here, scarcely one can be found who really cultivates the classics," wrote Melanchthon. "If these be not faithfully studied, what kind of theologians shall we have?"²³ On March 23d, 1524, Luther wrote to the

²²Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 575.

²³Ibid., p. 576.

elector requesting that Melanchthon be freed to devote full time to teaching Scripture rather than languages, and early in 1526 the elector increased Melanchthon's salary to one hundred gulden, specifying that Melanchthon would be expected to lecture on theology daily. Master Philip openly rebelled, and at last Luther agreed to let his colleague have the increase with the option of lecturing on theology whenever he pleased. To the end of his life Melanchthon remained professor of theology and Greek, and taught theology, classical literature and philosophy.²⁴

There never could have been a moment's hesitation in Luther's mind regarding the position he would take when the value of education was brought into question. His life had been spent in institutions of higher learning, and there was his heart also. Furthermore, the long and treasured association with Melanchthon had convinced him of the value and place of literary studies as a general principle. Always with Luther conviction meant action, and the ominous challenge that the extremists were presenting to the Reformation movement meant for a man of Luther's temperament that vigorous action was indicated. In March of 1523 he wrote to Hobanus Hesus in Erfurt assuring the famous humanist of his support of the work that the classical scholars were doing:

Do not give way to your apprehension, lest we Germans become more barbarous than ever we were by reason of the decline of letters through our

²⁴Richard, op. cit., p. 111.

theology. I am persuaded that, without a skilled training in literary studies, no true theology can establish and maintain itself, seeing that in times past it has invariably fallen miserably and lain prostrate with the decline and fall of learning. On the other hand, it is indubitable that there never has been a signal revelation of the divine truth unless first the way has been prepared for it as by a John the Baptist, by the revival and pursuit of the study of languages and literature. Assuredly there is nothing I should less wish to happen than that our youth should neglect poetry and rhetoric. My ardent vow is that there should be as many poets and rhetoricians as possible, because I see clearly that by no other method is it possible to train men for the apt understanding, the right and felicitous treatment of sacred things. Wherefore I beg that you may incite the youth of Erfurt to give themselves strenuously to this study. I am often impatient that in this age of enlightenment time will not permit me to devote myself to poetry and rhetoric, though I formerly bought a Homer in order that I might become a Greek.²⁵

To Strauss at Eisenach he wrote a year later:

I beg you to do your utmost in the cause of the training of youth. For I am convinced that the neglect of education will bring the greatest ruin to the Gospel. This matter is the most important of all.²⁶

3. Luther's Plea for Schools

The educational depression continued, despite Luther's work at Wittenberg and his letters of encouragement to other educators, in alarming fashion. It had begun to look as if the Reformation were essentially hostile to culture; universities and schools were coming almost to a

²⁵ quoted by Mackinnon (Luther, Vol. III, p. 216).

²⁶ Mackinnon, loc. cit.

complete standstill, and the scornful words of Erasmus, "Ubi regnat Lutheranismus, ibi internitus litterarum," were becoming literally true. The time had obviously come for heroic action, and for the popular hero of 1520 to erupt again into the national consciousness. Martin Luther once again dipped his pen in fire, but this was a constructive work more like the Liberty of the Christian Man than the Address to the Christian Nobility and On the Babylonish Captivity. The future of the Reformation was clearly at stake, and the extremists, though they might honestly think that they were accurately interpreting his doctrine, were undermining its very foundations; the people must be made to see that even in this time of unrest and barely suppressed rebellion the provision of trained leaders for the coming generation was an absolute necessity. Martin Luther wrote with the weight of the Reformation on his shoulders. The Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools²⁷ has been called the most important educational treatise ever written,²⁸ the "Charter of the German Gymnasia,"²⁹ and as significant in its own sphere as the Address to the Christian Nobility.³⁰ It was the last

²⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 103-32.

²⁸F. V. N. Painter, Luther on Education (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1889), p. iii.

²⁹Schmid, Encyclopedie des deusch. Erziehungs und Unterrichtwesens, article "Luther"; cited by Mackinnon (Luther, Vol. III, p. 222).

³⁰Hanke; cited by Mackinnon (Luther, Vol. III, p. 222).

great treatise to come from the pen of Martin Luther.

The Letter was a "cry of despair."³¹ Luther candidly acknowledged that the evangelical movement had had an adverse effect on education in Germany, and admitted that, now the monastic and clerical careers were falling into disrepute as the result of the New Theology, parents were naturally enough wondering whether it was good to educate their children. Hitherto, he explained, the devil was only too pleased to see the children brought up in the error and falsehood of the monastic and church schools, but now that he was in danger of losing the children to the new Gospel, he had changed his tactics and had begun to descant on the futility of all education. The lack of a sound education is exactly what the devil wants: "He thus possesses the world in peace."³² If any really crushing loss is to be inflicted upon the devil, it must come through the young people, "reared in the knowledge of God and spreading and teaching to others God's Word."³³ In reality the lack of a sound education is a worse enemy than the Turk, and if we give a single gulden for the defense of the empire, we ought to give a hundred to educate even one boy to become a right Christian man, in view of the value of such an educated man to the country.

³¹"Notschrei der durch die Thatasche des plotzlichen und allgemeinen Niedergangs des Unterrichtwesens seit dem Anfang der Kirchen revolution ausgepresst ist."

³²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 105.

³³Ibid., p. 106.

Therefore, I pray you all, dear sirs and friends, for God's sake and the poor youths', not to treat this subject as lightly as some do, who are not aware of what the prince of this world intends. For it is a serious and important matter that we help and assist our youth, and one in which Christ and all the world are mightily concerned. By helping them we shall be helping ourselves and all men. And reflect that these secret, subtle and crafty attacks of the devil must needs be met with deep Christian seriousness. If it is necessary, dear sirs, to expend annually such great sums for fire-arms, roads, bridges, dams and countless similar items, in order that a city may enjoy temporal peace and prosperity, why should not at least as much be devoted to the poor, needy youth, so that we might engage one or two competent men to teach school?³⁴

The support of education should be a much easier burden now that the Reformation has relieved citizens of the necessity of paying out money for indulgences, masses, pilgrimages and "other like humbug," and now the money can be used for the education of children, "which would indeed be a good and precious investment."³⁵

Furthermore, Luther urged the people of Germany, the Reformation has presented them with a golden opportunity³⁶ for giving their children a real education. In the old, scholastic schools such as Luther himself attended, men spent

³⁴Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 106.

³⁵Ibid., p. 107.

³⁶Luther wrote "eyn recht gulden iar," which is actually one of those delicious dramatizations of which Luther's idiomatic German is capable. Guldenjahr was the popular term for the year of jubilee, and was always regarded as a year of especial opportunity for blessing - a "year of gold" for those who bought letters of pardon. (Loc. cit.)

"twenty to forty years" learning to become only "asses, blockheads and dunces."³⁷ But the Reformation has freed its schools of pedantry and effort wasted in the scholastic method, and they are "now able to prepare a boy in three years so that at the age of fifteen or eighteen years he will know more than all the universities and monasteries heretofore." It is not necessary to revive the old style of education, and the new is so good that to neglect schooling is no less a crime than adultery:

How small a sin is corrupting virgins or wives ... compared with the sin by which precious souls are neglected and corrupted ... Children are daily born and grow up among us, and there is, alas! no one to care for or to direct them; we let them go on as they will.³⁸

There is no greater danger to the common good than an uneducated and ill disciplined generation of youth, and as parents as a rule are unfitted or too busy to attend to the education of their children, "necessity compels us therefore to engage public schoolteachers for the children, unless everyone were willing to engage an instructor of his own. But that would be too heavy a burden for the common man, and many a promising boy would be neglected on account of poverty."³⁹ In addition, the government must not be content merely with providing for training in German and the Bible, but also for the study of classic languages and literature, for the lack

³⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 107.

³⁸Ibid., p. 109.

³⁹Ibid., p. 110.

of which "we Germans are justly dubbed fools and beasts."⁴⁰

There is an impelling urgency vividly present in every page of the Letter: it is to everyone's concern to devote the greatest care and attention to the young, for "a city's best and highest welfare, safety and strength consist in having many able, learned, wise, honorable and well-bred citizens."⁴¹ The Germans must cease to be content to have "all the world call us German beasts, who know only how to war, gorge and guzzle."⁴² Moreover, time is growing short, and the emergency is great:

It is highly necessary, therefore, that we take up this matter in all seriousness and without loss of time, not only for the sake of the young, but in order to preserve both our spiritual and our temporal estate. If we miss this opportunity, we may perhaps find our hands tied later on when we would gladly attend to it, and may be compelled in vain to suffer, in addition to the loss, the pangs of remorse forever.⁴³

But Luther's mission in appealing to the cities of Germany to found schools for the training of their children was not merely to urge a system of compulsory schools; he was also deeply concerned that the schools be far different from the kind he himself attended: "that hell and purgatory in which we were tormented with cases and tenses, and yet learned less than nothing with all the flogging, trembling, anguish and misery."⁴⁴ He would have the children study not

⁴⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 113.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 111.

⁴²Ibid., p. 129.

⁴³Ibid., p. 124.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 123.

only languages and history, but singing, instrumental music, and all of mathematics:

My idea is to let boys go to such a school for one or two hours a day, and spend the remainder of the time working at home, learning a trade or doing whatever their parents desired; so that both study and work might go hand in hand while they are young and able to do both ... In like manner a girl can surely find time enough to go to school one hour a day and still attend to all her duties at home; she sleeps, dances and plays away more time than that.⁴⁵

The exceptional pupils should be given opportunity for more and advanced training:

We must certainly have men to administer God's Word and Sacraments and to do pastoral work among the people. But where shall we get them if we let our schools decline and do not replace them with others that are Christian?⁴⁶

He also urged the cities to establish libraries for the citizens of the towns, "not to huddle together indiscriminately all sorts of books and to look only to their number and quantity," he warned; "I would gather only the best."⁴⁷ The Holy Scriptures in all the major languages, the best commentaries, grammars and dictionaries, the liberal arts, law, medicine, should be available to everyone, and the "chronicles of histories," of "wondrous value for understanding and controlling the course of this world and especially for noting the wonderful works of God."⁴⁸

⁴⁵Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 123 f.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 124.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 128.

⁴⁸Loc. cit.

The Letter was a brilliant performance, called out of the mind of Martin Luther by real emergency. If no other words were ever said on the subject of education by the leaders of the Reformation, this document would place the evangelical movement in the vanguard of modern educational history. Martin Luther had proposed to the people of Germany, in his clear-cut and vivid style, the absolute necessity for a compulsory general education which would provide as broad a cultural and religious training as each child was equipped to use for every boy and girl in Protestant Germany. It was a common-sense kind of schooling that would train good citizens and capable leaders for both state and church, with a balanced program of literature, the fine arts, and vocational training. It was a program thoroughly consistent with the demand of the New Theology for church people who learned of Christianity by reading the sources themselves and who were free to work out their own system of beliefs. It was a program as fresh and modern as the twentieth century.

Since then, God has at present so graciously bestowed upon us an abundance of arts, scholars, and books, it is time to reap and gather in the best, so far as we are able, and to lay up treasure in order that we may preserve for the future something of these years of jubilee and not lose this bountiful harvest.⁴⁹

It was a program that might have changed the mind of Europe and altered the course of history. But violent eruptions of events and the idealistic classicism of Philip

⁴⁹Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 129.

Melanchthon decreed that the plan of Martin Luther would never have a chance.

4. The Peasants' Revolt and Its Effects

Luther's spectacular effort to reach the German people through an open letter was too late. The disturbances at Wittenberg had been quieted, but forces were being released far too powerful for any single man to control. Professor Carlstadt had already left Wittenberg, and at Orlamunde he settled as pastor of the evangelical congregation to preach a gospel of communism and discontent. From Jena, where he had a small printing press, he circulated tracts calling for an overthrow of Luther's leadership and open rebellion against the government of Saxony. Thomas Munzer also left Wittenberg deeply embittered against Luther when Wittenberg had rejected radical doctrines, and he traveled throughout southern Germany preaching against the whole existing social, political and ecclesiastical order, especially against infant baptism. In the wake of Munzer's fanaticism, towns appealed to Luther for counsel and guidance, and the Wittenberg doctor began to travel widely in a valiant effort to combat the increasing tendency of the evangelical doctrine to lead to extremism and revolt. In the course of these travels Luther came to Orlamunde, during the fall of 1524, where Carlstadt had led the people in destroying images, closing the convents, and shutting the schools, and it was at Orlamunde that Luther

received his first frightening glimpse of the obduracy and fanaticism that was rapidly gathering force across Germany. His trained powers of reason had no effect whatsoever upon the people of Orlamunde. "I was glad enough not to be driven out of Orlamunde with stones and mud," he admitted, "for some of them blessed me with the words, 'Get out, in the name of a thousand devils, and break your neck before you leave!'"⁵⁰

Meanwhile the tension mounted without abatement, despite Luther's determined effort to avoid overt revolution. In October of 1522 he journeyed to Weimar to preach a series of sermons before Duke John, and with his usual candor he devoted himself to the dreaded subject on the mind of everyone. Early in 1523 these sermons were expanded into a pamphlet entitled Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed, and if the peasants had read his Faithful Exhortation to All Christians to Shun Riot and Rebellion with satisfaction both princes and peasants read this tract and felt better. "We must firmly establish secular authority and the sword," the princes read, "that no one may doubt that it is in the world by God's will and ordinance."⁵¹ The peasants noticed that Luther said in this treatise: "For God Almighty has made our rulers mad. They actually think they have the power to do and command their subjects whatever they please."⁵²

⁵⁰McGiffert, op. cit., p. 246.

⁵¹Luther, works (Holman), Vol. III, p. 230.

⁵²Ibid., p. 231.

In actuality Luther was speaking with penetrating directness. "Worldly government has laws which extend no farther than to life and property and what is external upon earth," he pointed out, "for over the soul God can and will let no one rule but himself."⁵³ Both parties forgot that Luther also said, "And if all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, no prince, king, lord, sword or law would be needed."⁵⁴

Now that we know the limits of secular authority, it is time also to inquire how a prince should use it; for the sake of those who fain would be Christian princes and lords, and who desire to enter the life beyond, of whom there are very few ... He who would be a Christian prince certainly must lay aside the intention to rule and to use force.⁵⁵

The ruler does not think, Land and people are mine, I will do with them as I please; but thus, I belong to the land and the people; I must do what is profitable for them.⁵⁶

It was a remarkable ideal for sixteenth century Europe, but Luther had not lost his typical practicality in idealism: "Who does not know," he concluded with his tongue in his cheek, "that a prince is a rare bird in heaven?"⁵⁷ With this the peasants were in wholehearted agreement.

Throughout 1524 meetings and disturbances among the peasants in southwest Germany were common. In December

⁵³Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. III, p. 251.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 234.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 263.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 264.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 265.

peasants in Stullingen were commanded, in addition to their other labors, to go out and gather snail shells upon which the nuns could wind their yarn. They flatly refused. The revolt gathered headway in January. By February it extended through the Black Forest, Saxony and Thuringia. In March the peasants drew up their grievances in Twelve Articles and made them public. Theirs were practical complaints. They desired to choose their own pastors,⁵⁸ the right to withhold tithes from incompetent pastors.⁵⁹ "Seeing that Christ has redeemed and bought us all ... we be free and will to be so," stated the third of the Twelve Articles; "serfdom should be abolished unless it be shown us from the Gospel that we are serfs."⁶⁰ In the fourth place, the serfs requested that "the rights of fishing, hunting, shooting, belonging to the Lord, must be proved to have been purchased from the community or else surrendered."⁶¹ None of the Articles appears to go beyond the historical rights of the peasantry, and all show a rather clear knowledge of the peasant's economic needs.⁶²

The peasants not only published their manifesto generally, they sent a copy to Martin Luther with a request for his consideration of the principles involved. Though Luther

⁵⁸Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 211 f.: The Twelve Articles of the Swabian Peasants.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 212 f.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 213.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 213 f.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 214 ff.

had no inclination to make a pronouncement on such a critical subject, he had been forced into a position demanding action. He seized his pen and wrote an answer dictated by anxiety and modified by reluctance: An Exhortation to Peace Regarding the Twelve Articles of the Swabian Peasantry. He temporized by scolding both sides with fine impartiality. To the princes he wrote: "It is not the peasants who are resisting you, it is God himself."⁶³ "Deal reasonably with the peasants," he counsels, "as though they were devils out of their minds."⁶⁴

You go on oppressing and heaping up riches until the poor common man neither can nor will bear it any longer. The sword's point is at your throats, and you think you are so firmly in the saddle that no one can unhorse you.⁶⁵

You won't lose your property, and even if you do, you will get it back tenfold when peace is restored.⁶⁶

Such oppression and greed cannot be borne any longer. What's the use if a peasant's acres produce as many gulden as blades of grass and ears of corn if they are all squandered by the lord in display and dissipation as though they were chaff?⁶⁷

It serves you right, as people to whom nothing can be told.⁶⁸

Luther's advice to the peasants, on the other hand,

⁶³Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 221: Exhortation to Peace.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 223.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 221.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 223.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 224.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 223.

did not advance their cause. He combed the Scripture for texts which exhorted longsuffering under injustice and proclaimed the wickedness of disobedience.⁶⁹ He stigmatized the article which proposed to allot the tithes partly to the relief of the poor and partly to the upkeep of the pastor as pure robbery: "If you want to give and do good do so from your own."⁷⁰ In reference to the article demanding liberation of the serfs, he exclaimed with noble aloofness:

What is this? That is making Christian liberty a carnal thing. Did not Abraham and other patriarchs and prophets have serfs? Read what Saint Paul taught about servants, who were all slaves at that time. For a slave can be a Christian, and have Christian freedom, just as a prisoner or sick man is a Christian though he is not free. This article wants to make all men equal, and to make a worldly, external kingdom out of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and this is impossible, for a worldly realm cannot stand unless there be inequality of persons, so that some are free, some imprisoned, some lords, some subjects, etc.⁷¹

Such matters do not concern a Christian, and he does not ask about them. He lets who will rob, squeeze, pillage, oppress, for he is a martyr on earth.⁷²

"There is nothing Christian on either side," said

⁶⁹Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 229-41: Luke 1:15, Psalms 3:6, Matthew 26:52, Romans 13:12, 4, I Peter 2:7, Deuteronomy 32:35, Matthew 7:3, Romans 3:8, I Peter 2:18, Matthew 5:39 ff., Romans 12:19, II Corinthians 11:20, Matthew 5:44, I Peter 2:23, Luke 23:34, I Corinthians 6:5 ff., II Corinthians 10:14, 12:9, James 5:14, John 14:14, I John 5:14, I Timothy 4:10, Psalms 50:15, Psalms 91:15, Matthew 10:23, I Corinthians 4:11.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 240.

⁷¹Loc. cit.

⁷²Ibid., p. 241.

Luther in conclusion, still shaking an unaccustomed finger of nervousness at both parties, "and nothing Christian is at issue between you, but both lords and peasants are dealing with heathenish, or worldly right and wrong, and with temporal goods."⁷³ For Martin Luther this was an almost incredible exhibition of begging the question. He suggested that the parties try arbitration: "If you do not follow this advice," he concluded in plaintive bewilderment, "I must let you come to grips, but I am guiltless."⁷⁴

By the time Luther received his copy of the Articles the revolt was already in full swing. The situation favored the peasants initially, for the emperor had most of the available armed forces engaged in a war against France, and the princes were unable to mobilize armies immediately. The peasants became impatient and gathered in bands. They were joined by the riff-raff, out-of-work, mercenaries. They saw immediately from Luther's reply the impossibility of gaining their aim legally, and soon the whole of southern Germany was ablaze.

Something had happened to Martin Luther. This was not the man whose honest eloquence had four years before bent Germany to his will. This was not the man who faced all enemies of truth with fire in his eye and briarstone in his pen. The courage and the keen insight and the infallible sense of timing were gone. This was not the man who

⁷³Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 241.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 244.

understood the people and spoke their language, and made emperors listen to plain speech. If Luther had sent his exhortations separately and privately to the heads of each party, they might possibly have done some good. There was no beneficial effect to come from an open document in which each side could read the condemnation of its opponents. The peasants were not persuaded that it was their duty to suffer injustice indefinitely from fellow Christians who were their masters. Had not Luther himself advised them to "make common to each other the goods we have received, and that every man clothe himself with his neighbor's estate?" The lords, on the other hand, were confirmed in their belief that it pertained to their office to use force in the maintenance of order.

The sporadic outbreaks soon began to assume the scale of a full-fledged revolution. The news came that Erfurt had fallen to the "levellers." Frederick the Wise on his death-bed received the news and said patiently: "The poor are oppressed in many ways by us secular and spiritual lords; if God so wills that the common man rule, so will it be."⁷⁵

Luther now took active measures. He gave his pastors earnest instructions to go out among the rebels and convert them to the orthodox Lutheran doctrine, to turn them from violence and persuade them to be satisfied. He, himself,

⁷⁵R. Paschal, The Social Basis of the German Reformation (London: Watts and Company, 1933), p. 144.

passed through one of their camps near Wittenberg, but they treated him roughly. He was shocked to discover that all the heresies and sects flourished among them. They gathered about him demanding that he should declare himself for their cause, their theology, their social doctrine, and when he refused and tried to urge his own doctrine they catcalled, refused to listen, and called him the slave of the princes. In a state of shaken rage and fright Luther regained the safety of Wittenberg. In the south the army of the Swabian League had taken the field against the insurgents, and in the north Philip of Hesse was collecting his troops. Luther was furious, and he vented all his wrath on the peasants, whose lack of tenacity, cohesion and discipline and their inveterate habit of dissipating the advantages of any success in an orgy of drunkenness, was rapidly bringing the rebellion to disaster. He cast aside all restraint, now that the outcome was assured, and wrote his most damaging essay, the tumbling sentences of which reveal most candidly the terrible fright he had sustained: Against the Murdering and Pillaging Bands of the Peasants. It was a raging, cruel appeal for the extermination of the rebels. "Strike, throttle, thrust each man who can, secretly or openly - and bear in mind that there exists nothing more poisonous, more harmful, more devilish than a rebellious man."⁷⁶ This was a different Luther:

⁷⁶Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 249.

Fine Christians these! I think that there is not a devil left in hell; they have all gone into the peasants. Their raving has gone beyond all measure. . . .⁷⁷

Here, then, there is no time for sleeping; no place for patience or mercy. It is the time of the sword, not the day of grace. . . .⁷⁸

One who is killed fighting on the ruler's side may be a true martyr in the eyes of God ... for he is in God's Word and obedient to him. On the other hand, one who perishes on the side of the peasants is an eternal brand of hell, for he bears the sword against God's Word, and is disobedient to him and is a member of the devil.⁷⁹

Strange times these, when a prince can win heaven with bloodshed better than other men with prayer!⁸⁰

That Melanchthon supported Luther in his stand against the peasants is not nearly as surprising as Luther's own position. Luther was from the peasant class, but Melanchthon's background had been completely free of peasant burdens, a quiet life of study, touched, though at a distance, with the aura of nobility. Melanchthon knew nothing of the rights of man and recognized only the duty of absolute obedience on the part of subjects to their superiors, in social as well as educational circles. Melanchthon's cultural training moderated his stand, he did not urge a crusade against the peasants, and he was the first, when the war was nearly over, to urge mercy.⁸¹

⁷⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 250.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 254.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 252.

⁸⁰Loc. cit.

⁸¹Richard, op. cit., p. 151.

The lords scarcely needed Luther's encouragement to carry out thorough reprisals on the peasants. They cut the ill-organized and isolated detachments of peasants to pieces in Swabia and Franconia. At Frankenhausen in Alsace along the Rhine, on May 25, 1525, the trained soldiers of the princes caught the sleeping serfs unprepared and fifty thousand peasants lost their lives in an orgy of blood and violence. Martin Luther retched inwardly. "I, Martin Luther, slaughtered in the revolt all the peasants," he said many years later, "for I commanded that they should be slain; all their blood is on my head."⁸²

5. Salvaging the Reformation

Martin Luther was a shaken man. His day as a dashing reformer was forever gone. The peasants, with whom he had been so popular, had carried his ideas to a terrible if logical extreme, and he could never feel kinship with them again. He turned with abhorrence from the idea of communization of property: "Only through the preservation of private property," he said in 1530, "is man kept above the level of the beasts."⁸³ It became of essential importance to his thinking for the rest of his life to keep the masses, whose consciences he had raised above the authority of the medieval

⁸²Paschal, *op. cit.*, p. 149. For the record it should be noted that Luther added, "I remit it to our Lord God, who commanded me so to speak."

⁸³Ibid., p. 193.

church, under the domination of some principle that would be beyond debate. In the heat of the moment he had promised salvation to all who would slay the rioting peasants, a remarkable lapse on the part of a theologian whose first tenet was the inefficacy of good works in God's sight. Shocked, disillusioned, literally sickened by what had happened, the professor of Wittenberg withdrew into himself and his past. He became less and less the man of the hour, and more and more the child of the day. His moment of brilliance and incision had passed, and the Address to the Christian Nobility and the Treatise on Christian Freedom remained the great writing of the New Theology. The Letters to the Mayors and Aldermen in Behalf of Christian Schools was to be unsurpassed as the definitive contribution of the Reformation to the history of education, the translation of the New Testament continued to mark the high point of his achievement. From this point forward he bore far more resemblance to his hard-working father of Mansfeld than to the fearless Reformer who had defied the emperor, the pope and the Reichstag, all in one triumphant hour. For twenty years his sole purpose would be to conserve and mediate what had already been won for the churches of Germany. Betrayed on all sides, his social and economic thought turned to the milieu in which he had grown up and even in religious matters conservatism became emergent. Frightened by that which his theology might imply, he became morbid and introspective. When his moral standards were moulded to meet the needs of Philip of

Hesse in supporting a bigamous marriage, Luther's only refuge was the "good stout lie." He became insufferably conceited in the presence of Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer; he remained completely aloof from John Calvin. He frequently drank too much. He often gave way to towering rage. "Rage acts as a stimulant to my whole being," he explained. "It sharpens my wits, puts a stop to the assaults of the devil and drives out care ... Never do I write or speak better than when I am in a rage ... If I wish to compose, write, pray or preach well, I have to be in a rage."⁸⁴

Fifty thousand peasants died at Frankenhauseu on the 23th of May, 1525, and a deep pall of mourning descended upon all of southern Germany; there was hardly a family in all the hills, forests and villages that had not been directly touched. On June 13 Martin Luther married Katherine von Bora. In a condition of mental shock, Luther seized upon the one thing that seemed to him to promise the restoration of security and peace for his battered soul. It was the most selfish thing that Luther ever did; at the moment when all Germany was in mourning, Martin Luther was most concerned for the contentment of his own troubles. His sense of judgment and timing had completely deserted him; he could hardly have made a worse blunder at that moment. The move was symptomatic.

Almost every single detail of the affair was wrong.

⁸⁴Martin Luther, Tischreden (Weimar: Hermann Eekhaus, 1912-1921), #1210.

Luther is said to have married Katherine "for the purpose of pleasing his father, teasing the pope, and vexing the devil";⁸⁵ he succeeded in pleasing his father, who had been urging the marriage for months, teasing Melanchthon who was becoming deeply concerned for his best friend, and vexing all Germany. No invitations were issued for the ceremony and only a few for the wedding banquet. It is baldly clear that the marriage was being consummated in haste, under tremendous emotional pressure, and with but little concern for anyone else, even the bride. His invitation to some distinguished friends of his father's in Mansfield opens:

What an outcry, dear sirs, I have caused with my book against the peasants! All is forgotten that God has done for the world through me. Lord, priests, peasants and everybody else are now against me, and threaten me with death. Well and good, since they are so mad and foolish, I have determined before my death to be found in the state ordained by God, and so far as I can rid myself entirely of my former popish life, and make them still madder and more foolish, all for a parting gift.⁸⁶

Melanchthon was not among those invited to share in the nuptials, and he did not learn of the marriage until later; he was beside himself with annoyance at Luther's obvious loss of judgment, he wrote letters to his influential and learned friends of the evangelical movement attempting to explain the whole affair, and composing the announcement in Greek in order to keep the contents confidential:

⁸⁵ Philip Schaff, Saint Augustin, Melanchthon, Keander: Three Biographies (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1886), p. 117.

You will perhaps wonder that at this unhappy time, while good and rightminded men are everywhere sore distressed, he does not sorrow with them, but rather, as it seems, lives voluptuously and tarnishes his reputation when Germany specially needs his wisdom and strength.⁸⁷

"I see that Luther himself is in somewhat low spirits," Melancthon explained, and "I exhort you to take the matter calmly." He supposed, as many inevitably did, that the "incredible affair" was Katherine's fault, for at the moment when Germany was suffering from cruel suppression of radical views of religion and the standards of the medieval church, an ex-priest had taken a nun to wife!

Two weeks after the nuptials the bridegroom made a feeble gesture in the direction of apology for his blast against the peasants, but the loss to the Reformation was greater than could be recovered by apology and the half-hearted nature of the excuse was enough to indicate that the Reformer himself had changed. On June 27th he published An Open Letter Concerning the Hard Book against the Peasants. Maintaining that there is no excuse for rebellion, he insisted that severe punishment even for rebellion cannot be justified. He condemned unsparingly the "furious, raving, senseless tyrants, who even after the battle cannot get their fill of blood."⁸⁸ But even his apology is inverted. It seems that no one is satisfied unless he can condemn Martin Luther. "Ah, well," he sighs, betraying the years he had

⁸⁷Schaff, op. cit., p. 285.

⁸⁸Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 259.

aged in a few brief weeks,

if I were not used to being judged and condemned this might move me; but I am not conscious of any pride that is greater than my pride in this, that my work and teaching must at first suffer and be crucified.⁸⁹

The sternest blast that he can summon against the peasants has lost its former fire. This is a weary, not a withering condemnation:

A rebel is not worth answering with arguments, for he does not accept them. The answer for such mouths is a fist that brings sweat from the nose. The peasants would not listen; they would not let anyone tell them anything; their ears must be unbuttoned with bullets, till their heads jump off their shoulders. Such pupils need a rod. He who will not hear God's Word when it is spoken with kindness must listen to the headman when he comes with the axe.⁹⁰

There is no guilt to be assessed in the matter, insists Luther: everybody was at fault but himself. Again a very different spirit, obviously one of weariness but not of regret, dictates the words:

God's will has been done, in order to teach both sides a lesson. First, the peasants had to learn that things had been too easy for them, and that they were not able to stand prosperity and peace ... The peasants did not know what a precious thing it is to be in peace and safety and to enjoy one's food in happiness and security, and so they did not thank God for it. He had to take this way to teach them and relieve their itch.

To the lords, on the other hand, this thing was useful, too. They have found out what is behind

⁸⁹Luther, Works (Helman), Vol. IV, p. 259.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 261.

the rabble and how far they are to be trusted so that they might learn henceforth to rule justly and put their lands and roads in order.⁹¹

Martin Luther apparently never regretted his part in the Peasants' Revolt, and this alone is symbolic of the profound change that had been wrought in his personality. The revolt itself was, of course, the culmination of a series of events and trying experiences, and the total, accumulated impact of the years between 1521 and 1525 had a permanent effect upon Luther. He was hardened and embittered, sobered by tragedy, disillusioned by the extremes to which his gospel had been carried. Many of his followers were driven back into Catholicism, and many deserted into Anabaptism because they felt that Luther had betrayed his original principles. Instead of being the popular hero he was now hated and despised by multitudes in southern Germany. His confidence in the people was shattered with a totality that had permanent effects upon the course of Protestantism. Luther had become convinced in his bitterness that it was absolutely necessary to control doctrine and organize the church for the purpose of guaranteeing purity of the Gospel. His confidence in the people to whom the Reformation had been given was totally destroyed, and he determined to eliminate all radicalism from the evangelical movement with a firm hand. That it was achieved at the cost of human freedom and integrity of mind forms one of the saddest and most significant chapters of Protestant history. For theology the price was

⁹¹Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 271.

dogmatism; for education, a new and insidious kind of scholasticism.

A. The Visitations

The thunderbolt had struck again, and the time had come for a complete reorientation of the Reformation if it were long to continue. The educational depression persisted, and already evangelical churches were suffering for lack of competent leadership. The Peasants' Revolt and the tragedies of three years of disturbances had clearly shown the dangers of doctrinal radicalism. Whereas previously the chief work of the Reformation had been attacks on the papacy and its theology, now the time had come for organization and construction. If the movement were to live, aged and inefficient ministers must be retired and the radical leaders removed from their churches, new schools and congregations needed to be organized, quarrels demanded arbitration, and order must be established.

Martin Luther had always been reluctant before the Revolt to impose any forms upon the evangelical churches, and now his spiritual depression was such as to make his active leadership of questionable value. In 1523 Luther had made some suggestions for the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and in 1524 he had published a collection of hymns for use in the churches, but he had never considered

these suggestions binding upon the congregations in the least degree. And now, though he saw clearly the emergency, his attitudes were no longer constructive. Luther clearly betrayed his incompetence for the task in the letter he wrote to Elector John of Saxony⁹² on November 22nd, 1526. He deplored the ingratitude of the people for the Word of God which he had revealed to them:

They live like swine. There is no longer any fear of God or discipline, because the jurisdiction of the pope has ceased and everyone now does as he pleases ... If the elders do not want to, let them go to the devil for all I care. But where youth is neglected and raised without discipline, the authorities are to blame, and the land will be filled with dissolute savages. . . .⁹³

The Reformer lays the problem almost abruptly in the prince's noble lap, for he himself has no desire to accept the responsibility, it appears, for such matters. The lack of discipline and the regulation of the now unused cloisters and church foundations raises the "duty and inconvenience of regulating such matters," says Luther, "to which no one else attends and in which no one can or should be interested," except the government, which God has clearly summoned to the unpleasant task. Luther almost demands that the prince set up a visitation team to go through all of Saxony on a tour of inspection, and suggests that two represent the government in matters of property and salaries, while two be church

⁹²The successor of Frederick the Wise, Luther's great friend and protector, who died as the Peasants' Revolt was beginning.

⁹³Luther, *Werke* (Erlangen: Karl Hender, 1826-1845), Vol. LIII, pp. 386 ff.

representatives who, with "discretion," will be entrusted with the regulation of doctrine and personnel.

Instructions from Elector John were received in Wittenberg early in 1527 authorizing the visitation, and Melancthon immediately volunteered for the task of overseeing the first tour of inspection. Melancthon had not been happy at Wittenberg during the last year, and he was eager for this opportunity to escape from the morbid domination of a changed Luther. In February he had written to Camerarius:

Behold me, an exile from home, far from friends and relatives, among a people with whom I could not converse were I ignorant of Latin. Besides, in this place the greatest envy burns in the bosoms of all. At this time in this city those who have the management of affairs are not very harmonious.⁹⁴

On July 5, 1527, Melancthon left Wittenberg for Thuringia, where he met Frederick Myconius who had been pastor of the Lutheran church at Gotha since 1524, and Justus Menius, pastor at Erfurt, John von Planitz, Erasmus von Haugwitz and Dr. Jerome Schurf. This was the inspection team that made the first tour of visitation, setting a memorable precedent and submitting a significant report, for in the schools and churches in and about Kahla, Jena, Neustadt, Weida and Auma they found deplorable conditions: many of the laymen knew nothing more than the Decalogue, Creed and Lord's Prayer, few preachers had any clear ideas of the New Theology they

⁹⁴Melancthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 839.

preached, one pastor preached the evangelical doctrine in the parish church and read the Roman Catholic mass in the Catholic church, and one former monk who was asked "Do you teach the Ten Commandments," replied, "I don't have that book."⁹⁵ Many of the Reformed preachers did no more than to attack the civil government and denounce the pope, and some preached justification by faith without saying a word of repentance or salvation. By many of the people doctrinal freedom had been translated into freedom from moral standards, and many lived in open concubinage. In short, the deputation discovered little but disorder and confusion. It was from an informal visitation near Wittenberg that Luther returned to write the Small Catechism as a practical necessity for the people of the churches, and in the preface to exclaim:

Eternal God! what distress did I behold! The people, especially those who live in the villages, and even curates, for the most part, possess so little knowledge of the Christian doctrine that I even blush to tell it. And yet all are called by the sacred name of Christ, and enjoy the sacraments in common with us, while they are not only totally ignorant of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Decalogue, but cannot even repeat the words. Why need I hesitate to say that they differ in nothing at all from the brutes? Nevertheless, now that the precious Gospel has appeared again, they readily learn and abuse all freedom. O you bishops! how will you ever answer to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people, and for not having exercised one moment of your office that you might escape all evil?⁹⁶

⁹⁵Richard, op. cit., p. 159.

⁹⁶Joseph Strump, An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1935), p. 3.

Melanchthon's student heart was overwhelmed with the conditions he witnessed. To Camerarius he wrote:

I am engaged in a most difficult business, and, so far as I see, without result. Everything is in confusion, partly through ignorance, and partly through the immorality of the teachers.⁹⁷

He could find no legitimate excuse for leaving the people in such ignorance and stupidity: "My heart bleeds when I regard this wretchedness," he wrote. "Often when we have completed the visitation of a place, I go aside and pour forth my distress in tears."⁹⁸

B. Melanchthon's Report

On August 9th Melanchthon returned to Jena and remained there until the 8th or 9th of next April. The University had moved to Jena from Wittenberg where the plague had broken out, and Melanchthon lectured on Demosthenes, the Psalms, and the Proverbs of Solomon, but his most important work, perhaps one of the most important things he ever did, was the preparation of the report of the Visitation in Thuringia. The Visitation Articles were to be a guide for the inspection of other districts, and were to include a general standard of doctrine and worship for the churches visited. Melanchthon composed his report in Latin, later revising and elaborating it in German, then sent copies to the elector and

⁹⁷Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 881.

⁹⁸Loc. cit.

Luther for examination and correction. Early in 1528 the German Articles, Unterricht der Visitatoren, were published by order of the elector and introduced with a preface by Luther:

We do not publish this as a rigid command as though we would institute a new papal decree, but as a history, a witness, and confession of our new faith. Hence we hope that all pious pastors who truly love the Gospel will accept it and hold with us.⁹⁹

According to the preface three other districts had been visited meanwhile by Luther, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Spelatin and others, who concurred completely in the statements of Melancthon and the findings of the Thuringian party.

The Visitation Articles form one of the significant documents of the history of the Reformation, for they provide a glimpse of the incredible conditions that challenged the reformers to immediate and heroic action the results of which are still felt by Protestant churches, an understanding of the reasons for certain important changes in theological emphasis from the nascent New Theology, and an important appreciation of the sudden change in educational policy. The Articles formed the basis for the whole literature of the Kirchenordnungen, the name given all those regulations, especially those issued by cities and sovereigns, by means of which the church regulations which had previously been given were modified according to Reformation ideas and the newly

⁹⁹Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. XXVI, p. 46.

conceived church system was more fully developed.¹⁰⁰ They also established Melancthon as the practical educational and religious leader of the Reformation, and are a monument to his scholarly thoroughness and practical interests in the training of the common people.

The Articles contained at once a special form of investigation which later served as a model for the evangelical states of Germany, a confession of faith, a directory of worship, and a school order. Visitors were instructed to hold conferences with parish priests, interview the heads of families, and confer with the local councils, in order to investigate (1) the "cure of souls,"¹⁰¹ that is, preaching, the dispensation of sacraments, catechetical instruction, and pastoral visitation of the sick; (2) the instruction of youth; (3) the care of the poor.

The eighteen formal articles gave most attention to the doctrine which is to be preached, and the thirteen articles devoted to this subject formed the first confession of faith of the evangelical movement. Also, for the first time the mild, tactful hand of Melancthon is evident in the statement of Reformation principles: there is no attack upon the Roman system, justification by faith is to be made the central teaching of Lutheranism, but it is not to be preached to the exclusion of all other doctrines. "We have instructed

¹⁰⁰Charles Leonidas Robbins, Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 10.

¹⁰¹Seelsorge.

and exhorted the pastors that it will be their duty to preach the whole gospel, and not one part without the other." The Christian life has three parts, says Melanchthon: repentance, faith, and good works; the subject of good works is not to be subtly discussed, but rather stands for the whole good life of the Christian which is essential - chaste life, loving one's neighbor, doing him good, not lying, nor stealing, nor murdering. There are other areas in which Melanchthon's modification of the primary principles of Luther becomes evident: baptism is a symbol of the reception of faith, Christ's presence but not his actual body is present in the Lord's Supper, repentance is a sacrament because all the sacraments signify repentance, man has free will to do or omit the external works of righteousness by his own ability, but this freedom does not mean that man can purify his own heart, the act of salvation which must be accomplished by God alone. Preachers are specifically commanded not to indulge in invectives against the pope and Catholicism except wherein it is necessary to instruct the people.¹⁰²

Article fourteen deals with the Turkish War, fifteen with Divine Worship, seventeen and eighteen with Discipline and Church Orders, and the last article with Schools. The schools are to be divided into three classes, and the purpose of the schools is to teach the children Latin, not German, Greek or Hebrew. The schools are to be adapted to the needs of the children, though as a general rule the First class

¹⁰²I have relied chiefly on Richard, op. cit., pp. 163 ff.

should give introduction to Latin grammar, the second should give opportunity to read and memorize the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Decalogue and some of the Psalms, and the third class prepared to read Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, and learn the principles of dialectic and rhetoric.

Melanchthon had at last discovered the area in which he was to make his distinctive contribution to the Reformation: in theology it was practical Christian ethics; in education, the creation of a Protestant system of lower schools. "I am perfectly certain that I have pursued theology only that I might bring about a higher morality," was Melanchthon's theological motto.¹⁰³ To the gospel of free grace and pardon for sin he added the necessity of the ethical life. Repentance and faith are the beginning of the Christian life, but good works are its fruit. Even the sacraments are to have their influence upon Christian living. All his teaching from henceforth was to be dominated by the idea of the ethical personality.¹⁰⁴ It was an important corrective to the lack of moral concern among the extremists with whom he and Luther had so recently done battle.

From this time onward, too, the field of educational interest was clearly divided between the Reformation's two leaders: Luther plunged into the reformation of advanced education and found in lower schools only a necessary preparation

¹⁰³ego mihi conscius sum non aliam ob causam unquam teleologimenta nisi ut vitam emendarem.

¹⁰⁴Richard, op. cit., p. 166.

for the training of civil and religious leaders by the higher faculties at the universities; Melanchthon devoted himself to the primary schools in which it was his hope that everyone might learn the culture of the Greeks and the ethics of Christianity. Because of the emergency of disorder and confusion they discovered throughout Protestantism, both of them determined that education was a tool for the guarantee of uniformity of doctrine. It was a determination that was to lead them both far from the fundamental principles of the New Theology.

C. The Revival of Wittenberg

The most important immediate result of the visitations made by the leaders of the Reformation was the new practical interest in the problems of the schools. It had become evident before the Peasants' Revolt that the shift of emphasis among evangelical circles to a scorn of education was a dangerous trend; the conditions the visitors saw after the Revolt drove home with sickening impact the absolute necessity of changing the educational situation immediately if the Reformation were long to endure. The School Regulations written by Melanchthon as a closing part of the Visitation Articles became the first of a long series of educational ordinances. Bugenhagen visited and set up a school plan for Brunswick in 1528, Bamberg in 1529, and in the course of the next decade visited and counselled most of the evangelical cities of northern Germany. Melanchthon became so active

in the work of setting up schools for the children of Germany that he was universally granted the title of Preceptor of Germany, and his influence upon the educational attitudes of Protestantism became so widespread and permanent that the story must be told in detail.

Doctor Luther found his immediate work in the University of Wittenberg, which had suffered heavy losses of prestige, student body and academic quality during the last five years. Under his guidance a reorganization of the theological curriculum was completed in 1533, and of the whole university three years later. Since 1525 the evangelical criticism of the scholastic method had been so complete that the academic disputation had been dropped from the school calendar: at Luther's insistence it was revived, and in June, 1533, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Aepin, who was the superintendent of the Lutheran churches of the Hamburg area, were presented for the degree of doctor of theology. Melancthon drew up the theses and Luther presided at the disputation, which was attended by the elector and several learned men of his court, the English scholar Barnes, Henry VIII's envoy and later one of the martyrs of the British Reformation, and the Scottish refugee Alexander Alesius. At the conclusion of the academic ceremonies the elector gave a banquet at the castle celebrating the occasion of the university's return to the highest circles of educational achievement. In September two years later two more candidates, both of whom were administrative leaders of the reorganized evangelical

churches,¹⁰⁵ were graduated as doctors of theology. On this occasion Luther not only presided, but drew up the theses, and provided the doctoral feast for which the elector provided the entree and which his good wife Kathe served in the Luther home.¹⁰⁶ The very persons of these five men who became the first graduates of the revived interest in education are indicative of the practical emphasis of the new attitude: they were all church leaders whose tasks committed to them the training of the rising generations - John Bugenhagen, educator and popular consultant in the foundation of municipal schools; Casper Cruciger, university teacher and theologian, later pastor; Aepin, superintendent of the Hamburg area; Jerome Weller, superintendent at Freiburg; Nicholas Medler, superintendent at Naumburg. These men were representative of the leadership on which the future of the Reformation heavily depended. The revival at Wittenberg was followed almost at once by a series of reformations which amounted to the foundation of new schools for the Reformation: the universities at Tübingen, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Orléans, Rostock and Heidelberg became evangelical institutions for the first time, casting aside the old scholastic curriculum and organizing a system of training that would provide experts in the New Theology. The Reformation was clearly binding up its wounds and gaining strength.

¹⁰⁵Jerome Weller, Luther's intimate friend, who soon became superintendent at Freiburg; and Nicholas Medler, already superintendent at Naumburg.

¹⁰⁶Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, p. 108.

D. The Sermon on Keeping Children in School

The project of regrouping the educational forces of the Reformation was one that consumed most of Luther's time and thought during these years, and comes to expression in the best of his writing in this period. In 1529 Justus Menius, pastor at Erfurt, wrote a booklet entitled Christian Economy, and Martin Luther prepared the preface, the theme of which is only indirectly related to the book it introduces and reveals the Reformer's preoccupation with the pressing problem of over-all rehabilitation. Luther used the opportunity to point out the materialistic spirit that seemed to pervade Christianity in this day, and berated parents severely for being so interested in money and comforts that they neglect the training of their children, a criticism only one step removed from his own failures of five years before. Such parents, Luther exclaimed, are ruining both the government and the church, and "destroy domestic life and the training of the young, who grow up sheer wild beasts and sows, and are of no use except for gorging and carousing." Luther had come clearly to see that the future lies with these who are now children:

If we neglect the education of the young, where shall we get ministers and preachers apt to teach the Word of God, and undertake the pastoral charge and the public service of God? Where shall kings, princes, and lords, cities and rural districts find chancellors, councillors, clerks and officials?¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXI, Pt. 2, p. 41.

If this neglect is not remedied at once, Luther warned, "married and domestic life must go to ruin, and the world become a real pigsty." It is a direct command of God, he pointed out in the most powerful argument he can summon, that parents make the upbringing of children their first concern:

No, my dear fellow, if you have a child fitted for learning you are not free to bring him up according to your pleasure. It does not lie in your arbitrary will to do with him what you please. You are in duty bound, you owe it to God, to further the interests of the commonweal and serve Him therein. God needs ministers, preachers, schoolmasters in His spiritual realm, and you can supply Him with these.¹⁰⁸

"Nevertheless," Luther sighed in conclusion, "you do not," and announced his intention to speak more of this supremely important subject. This intention he carried out in A Sermon on the Duty of Keeping Children at School, published in August of 1530, in which he repeated many of the arguments of his earlier Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools. The Sermon lacks a great deal of the brilliance and fire of the Letter, and its style in many ways reflects some of the profound changes that had come over Luther: the Sermon is almost pedestrian in pace compared with the tremendous rush of the Letter, and it reflects a sobered, mature mind which has lost much of its buoyancy and enthusiastic hope and is now concerned with the real difficulties of practical problems so large that concern over their successful solution

¹⁰⁸Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. 2, p. 62.

dissipates enthusiasm and breeds caution. In this area of his interest, at least, this is the last glimpse that Luther affords later generations of his old self.

The dedicatory letter is addressed to Lazarus Spengler, Syndic of Nuremberg and an old friend. Nuremberg had recently founded a new high school, and Luther praised the city for its educational enthusiasm, and presented it as an example to other German towns.¹⁰⁹ The Sermon itself is a prolonged, oftentimes repetitious and sometimes wandering application of the text "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." The devil is abroad in the land convincing people that now that monkery and priestcraft are done away learning and study are superfluous, and the only object in life is to get a living and amass riches.¹¹⁰ The devil is also trying to persuade people that it is enough to entrust their children to ignorant and incompetent teachers, "who at great cost and expense will teach the children nothing else than how to be utter asses," like themselves.¹¹¹ We must be on guard against these false notions, and must "incite, exhort, torment and nag with all our power and diligence and care," lest the people neglect their children and "it will be the fault of our silence and snoring and we shall have a heavy account to render for it."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 135-38.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 139.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 140 f.

In the first place, proper attention to keeping children in school will provide a competent evangelical ministry: "Indeed, the world stands and abides only because of the spiritual estate; if it were not for this estate, it would long since have gone to destruction."¹¹³ Of course he was not thinking of the traditional priesthood, whose chief office was to say mass, "even though he did not know a word to preach and was an unlearned ass."¹¹⁴ The evangelical ministry includes the work of pastor, teacher, preacher, lector, and schoolteacher, and all of these tasks require training and education. To any parent who can afford to send his child to school and whose child has the ability or the desire to learn, but does not provide the opportunity for higher education, he said: "You are guilty of the harm that is done if the spiritual estate goes down."¹¹⁵ The minister is a teacher of morality and order, a leader of the people, and occupies the highest and most noble office in any community:

If God has given you a child who has the ability and talent for this office, and you do not train him for it, but look only to the belly and to temporal livelihood, then see what a pious prig and small potato you are.¹¹⁶

Luther made ample use of hell-fire in commending this

¹¹³Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 143.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 144.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 145.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 151; kreutlein, literally "small potato."

investment in education, and undoubtedly the appeal to the devil had as much weight with the people as the appeal to the Gospel; justification by faith alone might be the only true doctrine, but Luther was now quite willing in the face of appalling emergency, to wield the old arguments of fear. He summoned up God to address the reader on his death-bed: I have given you a child and money for building up My Kingdom, "but you have helped the devil to build and increase his hell; live therefore in the house that you have built."¹¹⁷ The ordinary evangelical arguments are not enough for Luther: "The sophists accuse us Lutherans of not teaching good works," he observed; "Fine fellows they are! They have not so bad an understanding of good works!" What do you think the ministry of a pastor and his preparation for his task are, but good works?¹¹⁸ Can this be the Martin Luther of 1520?

In the second place, the higher education is indispensable for the proper maintenance of civil government:

By what I have said I do not want to insist that every man must train his child for this office, for not all the boys must become pastors, preachers and school-masters. It is well to know that the children of lords and great men are not to be used for this work, for the world needs heirs and people, otherwise the government will go to pieces.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 152.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 150.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 153.

Poor men's sons should be kept in school and prepared for lesser tasks, if need be, for the shrinkage of the student body at the universities made the problem of supplying pastors and municipal officials a desperately urgent one.¹²⁰ Though the temporal estate is not to be compared in importance with the spiritual, "worldly government is a shadow, picture and figure of the lordship of Christ," and "worldly government maintains temporal and transient peace and life,"¹²¹ and public service is directly ordained by God. Government in Germany is guided by the Roman imperial law, and since "fist and armor" do not maintain it, "head and books must do it."¹²² Education is required, not only to understand the law but to understand God's will in its administration:

Now if you have a son who is gifted for learning and you can keep him at it, and do not do so, but go your way without asking what is to become of worldly government and law and peace; then you are doing everything you can against worldly authority, like the Turks, nay, like the devil himself.¹²³

The regrettable lapse in education has created an acute problem for the government, and if men are not trained immediately, "Tartars or Turks or an uneducated school-master will become a doctor and counsellor at court."¹²⁴

¹²⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 166.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 158.

¹²²Ibid., p. 160.

¹²³Ibid., p. 163.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 165.

Therefore I hold that there was never a better time to study than now; not only because knowledge is so abundant and so cheap, but also because of the great wealth and honor that must follow knowledge. Those who study in these times will become expensive folks, for two princes and three cities will yet compete for one scholar. For whether you look above you or about you, you find that countless offices are waiting in these next ten years for scholars, and yet there are very few who are being trained for them.¹²⁵

Many a man has risen from poverty to influence and power because he has been trained and educated. The Emperor Maximilian has said: "I can make knights, but I cannot make doctors," and even the pope was once a schoolboy. Luther recalled his early schooldays when he was a Parteken-genst, and begged bread from door to door in Eisenach so that he might continue in school: "I have come so far by the writer's pen that I would not change with the emperor of the Turks, and have his wealth and do without my knowledge."¹²⁶ "Without any doubt," he concluded, "I would not have come to this if I had not got into school."

Therefore, have your son study, and do not hesitate about it, and even if he has to go after his bread meanwhile, you are giving our Lord God a fine bit of wood out of which He can carve you a lord. It must continue to be a fact that your son and my son - that is, the sons of the common folk - must rule the world, both in the spiritual and the worldly ranks ... For the rich misers cannot and will not do it ... The born princes and lords cannot do it alone, and especially they cannot understand anything at all about the spiritual office. Thus both kinds of government on earth must remain with the middle class common people and with their

¹²⁵Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 165 f.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 172.

children.

And do not be disturbed because the common miser despises knowledge so deeply and says, "Ha, if my son can read and write German and do sums, he can do enough. I am going to make a business man of him." They will soon be so tame that they will dig ten ells deep into the earth with their fingers to get a scholar. For the business man will not be a business man long, if preaching and law fail; this I know for sure. Ye theologians and jurists must continue, or all the rest will go to ruin with us.¹²⁷

Luther concluded with a eulogy of the function of the physician and the schoolmaster, and a demand for universal, compulsory state education. "I hold that it is the duty of the government to compel its subjects to keep their children in school," he said;

If it can compel its subjects who are fitted for the work to carry musket and pike, man the walls, and do other kinds of work, when war is necessary; how much more can it and ought it compel its subjects to keep their children in school, because here there is a worse war on, a war with the very devil, who goes about to suck out secretly the strength of cities and principedoms, and empty them of able persons, until he has bored out the pith and left an empty shell of useless folk with whom he can play and juggle as he will.¹²⁸

The closing paragraphs dwindle off into deep pessimism, the contemporary situation reminding him of Sodom and Lot: "I pray that God will graciously let me die and take me hence, that I may not see the misery that must come over Germany."¹²⁹

¹²⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, pp. 172 f.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 178.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 177.

E. The Protestant Inquisition

Luther's confidence in the people had been profoundly shaken by the peasants' uprising, and his hope for a free and independent working out of the principles of the New Theology among the people had been permanently destroyed by the conditions he witnessed on his visitation. It seemed clear to him that the people did not appreciate the blessings the Reformation had brought them. Higher education would help the ablest to think correctly, but the people needed sterner control that the life and purity of the Reformation might be guaranteed. The saddest chapter in the history of the Reformation and the principles that were to saddle Protestant Germany with a new and sterile scholasticism, were beginning to take shape in the mind of Martin Luther.

The emergency was born out of the very principles of the Reformation. In the early period of the movement Luther had said with all his vigor, "The pope is no judge of matters pertaining to God's Word and the faith, but a Christian must examine and judge them himself, as he must live and die by them." He quoted the popular proverb, "Thoughts are free of taxes," and said that faith is free, and even heresy trials cannot compel the heart: "Heresy can never be prevented by force. Heresy is a spiritual thing; it cannot be cut with iron nor burnt with fire nor drowned in water." Even when the Anabaptists began to preach doctrines he thoroughly disliked, Luther at first advised the government to leave

them unmolested to teach and believe what they liked, "be it gospel or lies."¹³⁰

But the double impact of the Revolt and the Visitation changed Martin Luther. He wrote to Spalatin in mid-January of 1529:

Everywhere the congregations present a deplorable picture, since the peasants neither learn, nor pray, nor do anything else but abuse their freedom; they neither confess, nor go to communion, as if they had completely cast off religion.¹³¹

The Visitation revealed to Luther a church overrun with radicals and spiritual ignorants, "pagans" he called them, and the shock of the Revolt was too fresh in his mind for him to be satisfied with subtle measures or long-term planning. In 1527 the Elector John enacted a measure aimed at the Anabaptists forbidding all but authorized priests to preach and baptize, and within the year twelve men and one woman were put to death for violations of the provision. An imperial edict to the same effect followed in January of 1528, and an order by the Swabian League in February. "I am very loath to adopt the sentence of blood even when it is abundantly deserved," wrote Luther in July to Link, who had asked him whether the civil power were entitled to punish false prophets with death.¹³² Luther was afraid that the government might carry the punishment of heretics too far, that the

¹³⁰Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), pp. 643 f.

¹³¹Quoted by Hartmann Grisar in Martin Luther (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1930), p. 331.

¹³²Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, p. 63.

death penalty would "become a maxim," and that the innocent might be punished. "I can in no wise admit that false teachers are to be put to death," he wrote, but it was only the death penalty that Luther rejected, not the principle of punishing the unorthodox: "It is sufficient to banish them. If posterity should abuse this form of punishment, their error will be less grave, and they will only harm themselves."¹³³ Luther wholeheartedly detested the Anabaptist radicals, who had been so intimately connected with the Peasants' Revolt, and called them "crazy innovators," and "too prone to swallow the devil's blasphemies." Their belief was wrong, that was clear, and they would suffer punishment enough in the eternal fire of hell.

Within a year, however, Luther's attitude toward the sectaries had become even more bitter; he was no longer prepared to tolerate the Anabaptist errors. This year, 1529, was also the year of the imperial law passed by a coalition of Catholics and Lutherans at the Diet of Spires, condemning all Anabaptists to death, and often enough interpreted to cover cases of simple heresy in which there was no suggestion of political rebellion. It was the year also that Justus Menius, superintendent of the Eisenach area, and Gerhard von Thann, governor of the Wartburg, planned to write a work against the Anabaptists and wrote of their intention to Luther. "I am very pleased with the outline of your projected

¹³³Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, p. 63.

work against the Anabaptists," wrote Luther, "which I hope will be published as soon as possible." "As they are not only blasphemous but highly seditious," he continued, "urge the use of the sword against them by right of law," and justified the punishment by declaring it was that of God himself. When the book came off the press it bore a preface by Martin Luther entitled "Concerning Sneaks and Hedge Preachers,"¹³⁴ which was a direct attack upon those who dare to preach without a regular call to the ministry through the accepted channels, and a condemnation of the revolutionary, apocalyptic propaganda which they spread among the people and the Lutheran clergy. In October, 1531, together with Melanchthon Luther sent his approval to the elector for the infliction of the death penalty:

I, Luther, approve. Although it seems cruel to punish them with the sword, it is still more cruel to damn the ministry of the Word, to propagate false doctrines and spurn the true, and in addition to seek to overthrow the kingdoms of this world.¹³⁵

In 1536 he again joined Melanchthon and the other professors of the Wittenberg Theological Faculty in pronouncing in favor of the death penalty for the punishment of the persistent profession of Anabaptist errors.

Melanchthon, also, had been persuaded gradually and by desperation. At first he had relied on argument with the

¹³⁴Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. 3, pp. 518 ff.: "Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern," January, 1532.

¹³⁵Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, p. 69: "Placet mihi Iuthero."

radicals, and had written tracts in 1527 and 1528 attempting to persuade the Anabaptists of their follies. "At first," he wrote to Myconius in 1531, "I was foolishly clement. But now I greatly repent of this clemency."¹³⁶ He began to urge that the magistrates should proceed against them with the greatest possible severity. The law of Moses against blasphemy should be applied, and they should be treated as the Roman emperors had treated the Arians and the Donatists.¹³⁷

The night was not as violent, but the darkness that descended upon Germany covered shame as deep as the Peasants' Revolt. By 1531 two thousand sectarians had been killed in the name of orthodoxy. Catholics and Lutherans joined in the witch hunt authorized at the Diet of Spire. Duke William of Bavaria ordered: "Those who recant, behead; those who will not, burn." Luther began to refer to the executioner playfully as "Master Hans." At Rheinhardtbrunn six heretics were simultaneously remanded to Master Hans in December of 1529, and on January 18 of 1530 were decapitated for heretical radicalism. In Saxony the German mass was introduced for uniform use on Sundays; "It is not necessary to preach extensively to the laity about it," stated the order.¹³⁸ In the churches sinners were to be disciplined by denying the Lord's

¹³⁶Melancthonis, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 17.

¹³⁷Richard (op. cit.) completely omits any mention of this phase of Melancthon's career in his otherwise accurate biography.

¹³⁸Grisar, op. cit., p. 332. Grisar, who is a Jesuit, speaks of the "deceptive resemblance to the Latin Mass."

Supper to them, sinners who remained obstinate after warning were to be declared pagan in the eyes of the congregation, incorrigibles were to be subjected to a sort of excommunication. When their views became radical, their future lay with Master Hans. A regular inquisition was set up in Saxony, with Melanchthon on the bench, and under it many persons were punished, some with death, some with life imprisonment, and some with exile. The distinction between political sedition and religious heterodoxy became less and less clearly drawn. Melanchthon considered the denial of infant baptism, or of original sin, and the opinion that the eucharistic bread did not contain the real body and blood of Christ, as blasphemy properly punishable by death.¹³⁹ Others were more tolerant, and Melanchthon continued to urge severity in his letters to Myconious, and to blame Brenz for his tolerance, asking why he should be more kind to heretics than God who sends them to eternal torment.

The seizure of the city of Munster by the Anabaptists and the irregularities of their brief if dramatic career was the last spur to decisive action; it was clear to Melanchthon that if the Reformation were to be made secure it must be through the avoidance of any future revolts. In December of 1535 Melanchthon set up his inquisition at Jena for the examination of Heintz Krauth, Jobst Miller, and Hans Peissker, simple farmers who declared that they had no connection with

¹³⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 645.

the Munster movement.¹⁴⁰ Melancthon's examination revealed that they believed in the Trinity, in the forgiveness of sins, a simple life in accordance with the will of God and Christ's example. They also believed in sharing their goods with their brethren as the Apostles did, and affirmed that if they had a house full of gold they would not call a single piece their own. Because they could not find it taught in the New Testament, they rejected infant baptism; it was not necessary, because all children are children of God. "God is not such a God as would damn a little child for the sake of a drop of water, for all his creatures are good," they argued.¹⁴¹ Melancthon pounced on the defendants: Does not the scripture say that all are conceived in sin and are the children of wrath? The rustics replied that they did not care about such passages, for Christ had said of children that "of such is the Kingdom of God." Infants could not be guilty of sin, they argued in their naive and practical way, because they had not consented to sin. The chasm opened between them and Melancthon by formal education was beginning to open ominously. Melancthon asked whether they believed that children must be saved through Christ. Krauth answered in the affirmative, but when Melancthon asked whether, if they had no sin, they had no need of Christ's suffering, and whether he could prove this from Scripture,

¹⁴⁰Melancthonis, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 997 ff. and Vol. III, pp. 14 ff.

¹⁴¹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 999.

his reasoning broke down entirely. He retorted in a rage that he had been taught directly of God, who had written his beliefs in his heart. Then the typically radical elements of his thought began rapidly to appear the Lutheran belief in the Lord's Supper was pure idolatry, there was no need of civil government for Christ had made his followers free, and they should live together in a free communism of this world's goods.

Melanchthon's decision was cool, superior and completely unsympathetic:

We have in a friendly and Christian spirit prayed and exhorted them to suffer themselves to be instructed, and take into consideration the scriptural passages which he had put before them. We have pointed out that God would, in time, enlighten them, if they would set his Word before them and diligently reflect on it. But they say that they will abide by what God has taught them.¹⁴²

He concluded that they were a perverse and opinionated group of defendants, and pronounced that their opinions were seditious. The question of penalty was to be left with the civil judges, but in a personal letter written to the elector on January 19th, 1536, he advocated a stiff punishment. The three men were found guilty of sedition and executed on the 27th.¹⁴³

In the spring of 1537 the Wittenberg theologians received a letter from the Landgrave Philip, asking what to do about the Anabaptists who had been banished and stole back

¹⁴²Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1004.

¹⁴³Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, pp. 70 ff.

into his territories to renew their propaganda. The answer was entrusted to Melanchthon and signed by Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen and Cruciger, and counselled against the shedding of blood but urged whatever severity was necessary to control the menace to sound doctrine. Their teachings tend to anarchy, and therefore they come under the power of the civil authority which has the right to repel sedition by the sword. Ministers can fight error only with the Word, and therefore this is an emergency that cannot be handled by the church alone. They are a diabolical sect, and are to be punished, not for their opinions, but for the results of them. "This," said Luther in a postscript, "is a general rule. Nevertheless, your Grace may always let mercy go hand in hand with justice, according to the particular case."¹⁴⁴

* * * * *

It was a long, heartrending, soul-shaking path of revolution, blood and violence that the New Theology had come in twenty years. Martin Luther had been profoundly altered, and Melanchthon, robbed of the idol and stay of his maturity, began to revert, as child prodigies often do, to the ideals and training of his childhood for security and stability. The New Theology that had been born with a ringing demand for freedom had come in a score of dramatic years to the senility of holding doggedly to a maintenance

¹⁴⁴Mackinnon, Luther, Vol. IV, pp. 73 ff.

of sound teaching in the churches. The movement that had begun as a cause for liberty had come to insisting that all preachers who opposed the evangelical doctrines were to be displaced by the civil government, to a broken dependence upon the state to settle problems it had itself once raised. "If anyone teach that Christ is not God," wrote the shaken old man that was now Martin Luther, "but a mere man and like another prophet as the Turks and Anabaptists hold, such a person is not to be tolerated but is to be punished for profanity for he is not merely a heretic, but an open blasphemer."¹⁴⁵ Freedom to receive in personal experience from God or to learn from a study of the Scriptures the principles of faith was no longer a battle cry; among Christians there was a consensus of opinion as to true doctrine, and with this the individual must agree. The ecumenical creeds have become the standards of doctrine, and as in the medieval church, corporate rather than individual opinion has become supreme. Luther himself, or Melanchthon, may never have identified saving faith with orthodox religion, but the identification was an inevitable one in lesser minds, and orthodoxy came increasingly to overshadow everything else, came to be the end and aim of all religious activities. "Not that one should kill the preachers," said Luther, "this is unnecessary. But they should be forbidden to do anything apart from and against the gospel, and should be prevented

¹⁴⁵Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXXIX, p. 250.

from doing it by force."¹⁴⁶

There is no place in this philosophy for creative education. Schools can only be used to guarantee sterility of thought.

¹⁴⁶Luther, *Werke* (Weimar), Vol. XXII, pp. 146 ff.
Cf. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), pp. 88 ff.

CHAPTER IX

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CHAPTER IX

LUTHER ON EDUCATION

"There is enough written in books," wrote Martin Luther in 1526, "but it has not as yet been driven into the hearts."¹ Luther's approach to the problems of education was practical and unsystematic, dictated by the urgent necessity of driving truth into hearts and warmed always by the sure sensitiveness of his common spirit. Luther never possessed a philosophy of education, but he recognized the practical importance of intelligent and informed minds and spoke with great common insight of schools, religious training, and family education. His thoughts about education are random and scattered, and usually occur in connection with some other subject in a way which startlingly reveals the real personality of the man who scolded like a barmaid and in the next moment spoke softly and suavely like an Erasmus. His chief importance for the philosophy of education lies in his significance as the religious reformer who created the New Theology with all its implications, but his major qualification for speaking of the purpose, aim and method of German

¹Martin Luther, Works (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1916-1932), Vol. VI, p. 176: Preface to the German Mass and Order of Divine Service.

schools is his profound sense of identification with the circumstances, life and hopes of average Christian people in Germany.

The implications of the New Theology for education were literally so tremendous that neither Luther nor the people of his age ever understood them. For the first time in a millennium, Luther had made real the concept of the endless worth of individual human personality. In religious terms, which comprised his primary thought, Luther released all men to approach God personally and individually: "Nor are we only kings and the freest of all men, but also priests forever," he wrote in 1520, "a dignity far higher than kingship, because by that priesthood we are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God."² These were duties that had been entrusted for centuries to priests alone: ecclesiastically Luther wiped out the barrier between laymen and clergy, between secular and religious, between the lay and clerical levels of sanctity, and made all men equal in the most basic of all relationships, that between man and God. New duties and responsibilities opened in endless variety before every man: the right to be instructed in the faith and to interpret religious doctrine for oneself, and with it the responsibility for the efficacy and orthodoxy of one's own faith; the right to investigate and weigh the Bible itself as the

²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, pp. 325 f.: "On Christian Liberty."

source of Christian belief, and with it the responsibility of learning not only to read but think intelligently; the right of every man to a Christian education, and the corresponding duty of the Christian community to make the necessary provision of universal educational opportunity.

Though they were never welded into a philosophical whole, under the urgent necessities of church and state Luther felt and expressed a series of random insights which, taken together and seriously exploited in practice, could have changed the cultural and religious history of Europe. His own insistence upon the principle of authority, together with circumstances and lesser minds, however, combined to delay indefinitely the educational concomitant of the religious Reformation. In his Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen and the Sermon on Keeping Children in School, Luther pled for the necessity of compulsory education of all children both for the church and the state. With relentless insistence he impressed upon parents, ministers and civil officials their obligation to educate the young generation. His aim for education emerges in the Christian man, fitted through instruction and discipline to live a respectable Christian life and serve others in every relationship. His deep-seated appreciation of the home and disciplined family life as the basis of every success in government and religion led him to urge the Christian family as the fundamental educational unit of the community. His surpassing love of children and sympathetic understanding of their attitudes

and problems led him to urge that the learning process be made consciously pleasant for children, that instruction be carefully adapted to childish capacities, that things as well as words be studied, that discipline be tempered with love.³ The impact of these concepts, carefully organized and worked out in practical learning situations, might have worked an intellectual revolution. But these notions were

³Luther's remarks on the formal subject of education have been collected by P. S. Kretzmann in Luther on Education in the Christian Home and School (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1940). Kretzmann's book presents excerpts arranged under various headings, entirely without comment. F. V. N. Painter in Luther on Education (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1889) claims to give a review of everything that Luther said upon the subject (cf. p. iii). It is, however, not complete, and the material is interpreted from such a pro-Lutheran and anti-Catholic point of view as to render much of the work useless.

Luther's two works which bear directly upon the matter have been cited in Chapter VIII, above: Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen, and the Sermon on Keeping Children in School. Several paragraphs in the famous Address to the Christian Nobility present the same opinions at the earlier date, 1520. In the Large Catechism, Luther makes his chief practical contribution to religious education, and in the Smaller Catechism, especially in the preface, important suggestions for method are given.

Apart from the four sources mentioned above, Luther's educational notions are scattered throughout his sermons, letters, and Table Talk, and the following:

1. The Ten Commandments, preached to the People of Wittenberg (Die Zehn Geboten dem Volk zu Wittenberg gepredigt), 1516-7. Cf. Weimar Edition of the Werke, Vol. XVI.
2. Sermon on the State of Marriage (Sermon von dem ehelichen Stande), 1519. Weimar Edition, Vol. IX, pp. 213 ff.
3. Sermon on Good Works (Sermon von guten Werken), 1520. Weimar Edition, Vol. IV, pp. 198 ff.
4. Sermon on Holy Marriage (Predigt vom ehelichen Leben), 1522. Weimar Edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 207 ff.
5. Ordinance of a Common Chest (Ordnung des gemein Kasten zu Leisnig). Weimar Edition, Vol. XII, pp. 1 ff.; Holman Edition, Vol. IV, pp. 92 ff. (preface only).
6. German Mass and Order of Divine Service (Deutsche Messe und Ordnung des Gottesdienstes), 1529. Weimar Edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 44 ff.; Holman Edition, Vol. VI, pp. 153 ff.

scattered rather than systematized, vague attitudes rather than clear principles, peripheral rather than central, and always, in the last analysis, subjected to the controlling judgment of religious orthodoxy and political authority. They became obscured under the sterile dust of scholasticism that gathered in the later sixteenth century on all Reformation principles. Actually they were never of live importance, and today represent chiefly the antiquarian's vain interest in what might or should have been.

1. Influence on Printing

Typical of both the practical and incidental quality of Luther's educational concern, as well as of untold significance for every phase of European life, was the spectacular interrelationship of support and influence between Martin Luther and the newborn printing industry. So important was the invention of printing that there have been few events like it in the history of the world: both modern democracy

7. Introduction to a Book on Christian Housekeeping by Justus Menius (Vorrede auf Justus Menius Buchlein von christlicher Haushaltung), 1529. Weimar Edition, Vol. XII, Book II, pp. 49 ff.

8. Introduction to Capella's History of the Duke of Milan (Vorrede auf die Historia Galeatii Capellae vom Herzog Mailand), 1538. Weimar Edition, Vol. I, pp. 383 ff.

9. Of Councils and Churches (Von dem Konzillien und Kirchen), 1539. Weimar Edition, Vol. I, pp. 468 f., Holman Edition, Vol. V, pp. 131 ff.

10. The Small Prayer Book (Betbuchlein), 1522. Weimar Edition, Vol. X, Part II, pp. 331 ff.; and Baptismal Book (Taufbuchlein), 1523, Weimar Edition, Vol. XII, pp. 38 ff.; and Formulae Missae, 1523, Weimar Edition, Vol. XII, pp. 197 ff.

and the scientific spirit were released by the printing press, and in the same process the growing reading public replaced the secret chambers of the learned elite as the final bar of judgment before which all new notions must be justified. At the moment when the press was feeling itself secure for the first time, Martin Luther strode into history proclaiming that every man must read the Bible and test religious faith for himself. The Reformation was as much an intellectual as a spiritual revolution, and the press was ready to carry the argument to the minds of the people of Germany, and all Europe. For thousands of people the first practical knowledge of the existence of the printing press and religious freedom came to them simultaneously with the Reformation pamphlets and the Lutheran New Testament.⁴

The sixteenth century was perhaps the greatest century of mass intellectual awakening in history, and Martin Luther was one of the most successful authors of all time. Luther literally kept the presses of Germany busy. During the century approximately one hundred thousand different works were printed or reprinted in Germany. If each of these editions averaged one thousand copies, about a million volumes

⁴George Haven Putnam, *Books and Their Makers during the Middle Ages* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), Vol. II, p. 218. Cf. p. 219: "It was the Reformation and the superior intellectual activity of the Protestants that transferred the literary and publishing preponderance from the south to Northern Germany, a preponderance that through the succeeding centuries has continued and has increased."

were offered to the German public each year during the Reformation century. In 1513 the total number of separate works printed in Germany was ninety, in 1518 there were one hundred and forty-six, of which twenty were from Luther's pen.⁵ Of two hundred and sixty books issued in Germany in 1519, fifty were Luther's; in 1520 German presses issued five hundred and seventy works, of which Luther had written one hundred and thirty-three; and in 1523 Luther was the author of one hundred and eighty-three of the nine hundred works published.⁶ Many of these were short, controversial tracts,

⁵Putnam, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 240. Cf. Thomas M. Lindsay, Luther and the German Reformation (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1925), p. 91.

⁶Luther's published works are listed by Putnam (*op. cit.*, pp. 219 ff.) as follows:

1516. Sermons on the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

1517. Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms. The title page of this volume reads: "F. Martinus Luder Augustiner zu Wittenberg." The Seven Penitential Psalms was one of the two devotional publications of Colard Mansion, the first printer of Bruges, whose first edition was issued in 1471.

1517. A Sermon on Indulgences and Grace. The immediate incentive to this sermon was the sale of indulgences by Tetzel.

1518. Conclusions. The title given to the famous Ninety-five Theses.

1518. Lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians.

1520. Address to the Christian Nobility of Germany. The title page bears no imprint and no date. Below the name of the author appears simply "zu Wittenberg."

1520. A treatise entitled "Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciples Were Burnt by Martin Luther."

1521. A series of controversial pamphlets in reply to Emser's argument at the Diets of Worms.

1521. An Exposition of the Gospel, and a commentary on the Magnificat.

1521. Tracts on the Abuses of Masses and on Monastic Vows.

1522. (September) The Complete German Version of the New Testament. The first edition was five thousand copies.

and many of the editions were reprints issued in complete independence of Luther's approval or authorization, but their sale was phenomenal. The Address to the Christian Nobility sold five thousand copies in five days in August of 1520, and the pamphlet of 1518 containing his controversial address against Eck sold fourteen hundred copies in two days at the Frankfort Fair. In two years the Ninety-five Theses ran through twenty-two editions, and the Theologia Germanica, which Luther sponsored, had eighty separate

1522. (December) A second edition of five thousand copies.

1527. Treatises in reply to Zwingli and Oecolampadius on the Lord's Supper controversy. The four years following 1522 appear to have been chiefly devoted, as far as literary production was concerned, to the revision of the New Testament and to work on the German version of the Old Testament. These were also the years of the Peasants' disturbances and Revolt.

1528. Tracts on Confession, the Lord's Supper, Anabaptism, the war against the Turks, commentary on the first twenty-five Psalms, a version of the Fables of Aesop.

1530. (Diet of Augsburg.) A series of tracts on the Keys of the Church, the Forgiveness of Sins, and a commentary on the 118th Psalm.

1531. Gloss on the supposed edict of the emperor, and a Warning to His Beloved Germans.

1537. Treatise on German Names. Issued anonymously at Wittenberg, but seems to have been Luther's work.

1539. Treatise on Councils and Churches.

1539. Tract against the practice of usury.

1541. Treatise on Biblical Chronology.

1541. Completed version of the German Bible.

1543. The Summer Postils, with a series of sermons on the Epistles.

1545. Pamphlet, The Popedom at Rome Instituted by the Devil.

1545. Cransach's Caricatures against Popedom, with brief verses on texts by Luther.

1545. Revised version of his collected Latin sayings. All of these were printed at Wittenberg, and most of them were issued at once in two editions, one Latin and one German.

editions in four years.⁷ Luther's works were printed in Wittenberg, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Basel, Breslau and Prague in German, Latin and Bohemian.⁸ In 1518 Luther brought Melchior Lotter from Leipzig to set up a printing house at Wittenberg, which in Luther's lifetime issued no less than one hundred thousand copies of the New Testament alone.⁹

A. The Bible

In the translation of the New Testament, Luther accomplished at one stroke his most realistic contribution to religious reformation and to popular education. In it the German people found not only an incentive to mastery of the art of reading, but great and sublime truths in their own language, tuned to their own ears. Luther made every effort to give the Scripture to the people, he would often "search a fortnight, or three or four weeks" for a single word, he went to the market to hear how the people talked, what idioms they used. With Melanchthon he sometimes managed "only three lines in four days,"¹⁰ and when Melanchthon would say in a heated debate over a word, "All I care for is the Greek," Luther would retort, "And all I care for is the German."¹¹

⁷Of course, only the preface was Luther's, but it seems to have been public opinion that the entire work was from his hand.

⁸Putnam, op. cit., pp. 222 f.

⁹Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. V, p. 14: On Translating: An Open Letter.

¹¹James K. Hosmer, A Short History of German.

In defense of his translation, Luther reveals how completely he abandoned himself to the task:

We must not, like these asses, ask the Latin letters how we are to speak German; but we must ask the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the market place about this, and look them in the mouth to see how they speak, and afterwards do our translating. That way they understand it and mark that one is speaking German to them.¹²

Luther himself furnishes a vivid example of his principle of procedure. When Christ says "Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur," the smoothest literal translation would be, "From the superfluity of the immaterial part proceedeth the utterance." "Tell me," says Luther, "is that German? What German understands that?" The only meaning that could have, he points out, is that someone had too large a heart, or too much heart. The German would be, "If the heart's full, the mouth'll out with it,"¹³ or in formal language, "What fills the heart overflows the mouth." "That is speaking good German," Luther observed, "the kind I have tried for, and unfortunately, have not always reached or hit upon."¹⁴ That he succeeded in giving the Bible to the German people, the Catholic theologian Cochlaeus amply verifies:

Literature (St. Louis: G. I. Jones and Company, 1879), p. 189.

¹²Luther, Works (Kolman), Vol. V, p. 15.

¹³Nes das hertz vol ist, des gehet der mund uber.

¹⁴Luther, Works (Kolman), Vol. V, p. 15.

Luther's New Testament was multiplied by the printers in a most wonderful degree, so that even shoemakers and women and every lay person acquainted with the German type, read it greedily as the fountain of all truth, and by repeatedly reading it impressed it on their memory. By this means they acquired in a few months so much knowledge that they ventured to dispute not only with Catholic laymen, but even with masters and doctors of theology about faith and the gospel.¹⁵

Luther's aim led him to approach his task with a great deal of freedom. He never used the word church, always replacing it with a word more suitable to his ecclesiastical doctrine, congregation.¹⁶ He made Matthew 3:2 read "improve yourselves," rather than "do penance" as in the older German versions.¹⁷ He made the Psalms speak very clearly of Christ, transformed the passover into Easter, and inserted the word "alone" after "faith" in the passage "A man is justified by faith without works of the law."¹⁸

Sometimes his judgments may have been a matter of taste rather than sound scholarship, but always he was guided by a strong, intuitive feeling for style and human understanding. Especially when the limitation of his sources is understood, his conclusions were little less than remarkable:¹⁹ he denied the Mosaic authorship of a part of the

¹⁵ quoted by Putnam (op. cit., pp. 227 f.).

¹⁶ never Kirche, always Gemeinde.

¹⁷ Translating metanoete as bessert euch rather than tut Busse.

¹⁸ Romans, 3:28.

¹⁹ For the New Testament he relied chiefly on Erasmus' Greek Testament, published first in March, 1516, and again

Pentateuch, asserted that Job and Jonah were fables, found that the book of Kings were more reliable history than Chronicles, concluded that the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes were given their final form by editors, doubted the value of Esther, the authorship of Hebrews and the authenticity of the Apocalypse, and declared that the Epistle of James was written by some Jew who knew of the Christians but had not joined them.²⁰ In all of these opinions Luther anticipated the conclusions of modern scholarship. His principle was, "What treats well of Christ, that is Scripture, even if Judas and Pilate had written it."²¹ Nevertheless, rational biblical criticism was considered by Luther, except when he was the critic, as a cause for vehement suspicion of atheism. Luther could entrust no one else with the freedom he claimed for himself in treatment of the

in 1519, 1522 and 1527. Erasmus himself relied on ten manuscripts for his first edition, all minuscules, the oldest of which, though he believed it might have come from the apostolic age, is assigned by modern criticism to the twelfth century. In all of these manuscripts the last verses of the Apocalypse were missing, and were supplied from an extremely faulty translation from the Latin. Nevertheless, Erasmus himself noted that the last verses of Mark were doubtful, that the passage on the adulteress (John 7:53-8:11) was lacking in the best authorities, and omitted the text of the three heavenly witnesses (1 John 5:7) as absent from all his manuscripts. He found the Epistle to the Ephesians Pauline in thought but not in style, and believed Hebrews to have been written by Clement of Rome. He called James lacking in apostolic dignity.

²⁰Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), pp. 508 f.

²¹Loc. cit.

inspired authors, and for three hundred years the most intolerant attitudes were maintained by his disciples against those who dared to interpret Scriptures with independence.²²

B. The Schools

The advance in printing also exerted a tremendous direct influence upon the schools. For centuries schoolmasters had been handicapped by a lack of textbooks, and throughout the Middle Ages teaching methods had been adapted to a classroom in which there was no other text than that possessed by the instructor. Within a few years this situation was changed. Reuchlin reported that when he began his lectures in Inglostadt in 1520 there was no single volume in Greek or Hebrew in the university, and he was obliged to write out texts in the two languages on the blackboards for the students to transcribe. Thomas Platter learned Hebrew

²²cf. the ten rules of the Council of Trent in relation to prohibited books, approved by Pius IV in a bull issued in 1564, e.g.:

4. Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to everyone, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it, it is, on this point referred to the judgments of the bishops or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety, they apprehend, will be augmented, and not injured by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if anyone shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary. Booksellers, however, who shall sell, or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, to be applied by the Bishop to some pious purpose, and be subjected to the bishop to such other penalties as the bishop shall judge proper, according to the quality of the offense.

from the books of Myconius by stealth, and when Melancthon began his lectures on Demosthenes in 1524, the only copy of the Orations in Wittenberg was that owned by the lecturer.²³

Luther and the printing press changed that basic situation. The usual price for Protestant tracts was one groschen, or about two and a half cents. The Lutheran Bible sold for nineteen groschen at the Leipsig Fair, and twenty at the Frankfort Fair.²⁴ In 1523 the evangelical pastor at Strassburg wrote, "The Lutheran books are for sale here in the marketplace immediately beneath the edicts of the Emperor and of the Pope declaring them to be prohibited."²⁵ A jurist wrote to Cardinal Campeggi from Nuremberg in the next year that "every commonman is now asking for books or pamphlets and more reading is being done in a day than heretofore in a year."²⁶ Throughout Germany it became the practice to read the books of Luther out loud in the marketplace. The veil in the temple of knowledge had been rent, and the intellectual holy of holies jealously guarded by medieval scholars from the common man had been revealed for all to see and read. The mind of man could never again be completely controlled by any church or state, and though the attempt was to be made

²³Putnam, op. cit., p. 238.

²⁴Ibid., p. 234. The purchase value was high, of course, two and a half cents being worth twelve cents in trade when Putnam wrote in 1897, and possibly four times that today.

²⁵Ibid., p. 246: Mattheus Zell.

²⁶Loc. cit.: Scheurl.

again almost immediately by the Reformers themselves and repeated time after time, in each instance failure was destined to follow, for man had become a free and independent being.

2. The Christian Family

For Martin Luther's practical mind and tender heart, the Christian family was not only the fundamental human relationship of both church and secular society, but also the primary educational institution. "The school must stand next to the church," Luther pointed out in 1539, "and the house of the citizen stands next to the school."²⁷ The school trains ministers and leaders for the church, the home furnishes the pupils, and the circle is completed by the "courthouse and the castle" which protect the citizens and the schools. "God must preserve such ring or circle against the devil," said Luther, "for God must be the highest and the one most concerned."²⁸ Family, state and church are "the three hierarchies established by God," and the basis of both state and church are to be found in the divinely sanctioned relationship of the family.

²⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. V, p. 298: On Councils and Churches.

²⁸Loc. cit.

A. Importance of the Family for Church and State

Luther was profoundly distressed by the vices and attitudes of the Roman clergy and monks which had led to a general lowering of the family ideal in the late Middle Ages, and considered the home both sacred and wonderful. He repeatedly referred to marriage as "the estate which God loves" and spoke of "holy wedlock" as "instituted by God," remarking that "God regards it highly, and Christ himself honors it and speaks words of comfort, it should rightly be valued and precious to everyone."²⁹ However, marriage does not exist for itself alone, and the family is incomplete without children, as far as Luther was concerned. It is in bringing up children that the highest privilege comes to human persons: the father who brings up his children in decency and honesty "is in a blessed, good, holy station," and the woman "who waits on her children in giving them food and drink, in cleaning and bathing them, need not inquire after a holier and more God-pleasing station."³⁰ The relationship of parents and children is paralleled only by the relationship between man and God, "for as a child expects all good things from his parents, thus a Christian expects all good things from God,"

²⁹Luther, Werke (Erlangen: Karl Hender, 1826-1845), Vol. II, p. 10, 1833, House Postil. "It is an estate which urges and exercises faith in God and love toward the neighbor by virtue of manifold trouble and labor, disinclination, crosses and adversities of all kinds, as invariably follows all that is God's Word and work."

³⁰Loc. cit., Sermon on John 2:1-11.

and "God conducts himself toward a Christian as a father does toward his child and with even greater kindness."³¹

Father and mother here become like God, for they are rulers, bishops, popes, doctor, minister, preacher, schoolmaster, judge and lord. The father has all the names and the office of God over his children; and just as God cares for us, nourishes us, protects and defends, teaches and instructs us, thus also a father teaches his child, nourishes it, and cares for it.³²

"Everything must serve the children," wrote Luther, "possessions, house and home, man-servant and maid-servant."³³ It is a tremendously significant responsibility to Luther, for he was convinced that "all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents."³⁴ However, there are families, he has observed, who bring up children badly, permit children to follow their own way. "The consequence is that there is an ill-bred and wild group among us Germans and Christians, such as one can hardly find anywhere else in the world." Luther spoke pointedly to the parents who have permitted this condition to arise: "This is all due to the fact that we are not properly trained in our youth."³⁵ In Luther's estimation, parents can commit "no more harmful

³¹Exposition of Exodus 20:12, cited by Kretzmann (op. cit., p. 32).

³²Loc. cit.

³³Loc. cit.

³⁴Luther, Werke (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus, 1885-1939), Vol. XIX, Pt. I, p. 204: Exposition of the Fourth Commandment, Large Catechism, 1529.

³⁵Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. VI, p. 299: Sermon on Luke 1:39-56, 1533. Cf. Kretzmann, op. cit., pp. 57 f.

thing than to neglect their children, permitting them to swear, curse, learn shameful words and live according to their own desire."³⁶ Only an irrational creature like the ostrich "hardens her heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers." Christian people, however, are expected to treat their holy responsibility with more concern.

"In my judgment, there is no other outward offense that in the sight of God so heavily burdens the world and deserves such heavy chastisement as the neglect to educate children."³⁷ For that matter, if the children are disobedient and impertinent when they grow up, Luther assumes that the fault is greater in the parents than in the children:

Whose is the fault? Does it lie with the children? What can they do about it? Therefore father and mother should be concerned about them, diligently train, instruct and teach them, not only after the manner of the world, but also in spiritual things, which pertain to their soul's salvation.³⁸

But Luther was not content with merely showing parents their duty. With every argument at his command he urged parents to performance of those duties. He pointed out the divine requirements laid upon parents, pictured the evils resulting to society through neglect of children, urged gratitude to God and obligations to society as motives, and called

³⁶Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. IX, pp. 213 ff.: Sermon on the Married Estate, 1519. "There is also no greater harm to Christendom that the neglect of children. For, if we are to be of assistance to Christendom, we must certainly begin with the children, as was done formerly."

³⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 109: Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen, 1524.

³⁸Sermon on Exodus 20:12 (op. cit.)

down guilt and divine punishment upon those who do not take their responsibilities seriously. Parents are not free to do with their children as they please, "as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live."³⁹ "Do not think," Luther warned, "that this is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will, but that it is a strict command and injunction of God, to whom also you must give an account for it."⁴⁰ This was a consistent attitude with Luther: in 1519 he wrote, "in dealing with one's own children, he can earn either life or death";⁴¹ in 1520, "Parents may not more easily earn hell than in dealing with their own children in their own home if they neglect them and teach them not";⁴² and in 1529, "Consider what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you would bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell, by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy."⁴³ The anarchy and

³⁹Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. I: The Large Catechism. Cf. Fretzmann, p. 23.

⁴⁰Loc. cit.

⁴¹Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. XXXVI, pp. 145-154: Exposition of the Fourth Commandment.

⁴²Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. IV, pp. 190 ff.: Sermon on Good Works.

⁴³Ibid., Vol. XXX, Pt. I: The Large Catechism.

violence that followed the Reformation, and altered Luther and the New Theology so profoundly, became part of the argument, for Luther saw in home training the greatest bulwark against future outbreaks:

Because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see that it is our own fault; for as we train them, we have spoiled and disobedient subjects and children.⁴⁴

B. Parental Religious Instruction

The primary duty of the home, and its most significant opportunity, was to give children their first religious instruction. "It would please me well if this work were to begin in the cradle," he said. "The greatest work which thou canst perform is just this, that thou properly trainest thy child."⁴⁵ In order to insure a reliable Christian citizenry for the future, parents are commanded to give especial attention in home training to the Scriptures, and that children be "drilled and exercised in it lest it become rusty and dark, but rather always remain new and bright in their memory and in their actions. For the more one deals with the Word of God, the brighter and newer it becomes."⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. I, written in 1529.

⁴⁵Ibid., Vol. IX, pp. 213 ff.: Sermon on the State of Marriage, 1519.

⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 267: Sermon on Holy Marriage, 1525.

Catechism should also be used as a guide in home religious education:

Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it.⁴⁷

However, in 1533 Luther has seen that even this religious training must be subject to the control of orthodoxy, and cautions that parents "should not teach their children or lead them to God according to their own ideas, but according to the commandments of God," that is, "Teach them God's commandment and Word, as you have learned it, and not your own doing."⁴⁸

C. Parental Discipline and Authority

Luther saw in the training and authority of the home the ideal guarantee against insurrection and anarchy. In addition to religious orthodoxy, children must be taught the obedience which for him had become synonymous with good citizenship. The basic attitude of parents toward children should be one of love, but the attitude of the children must be one of honor. For Luther, honor was a higher thing than love, because in addition to love honor involves modesty, humility, deference to authority, and not only respectful

⁴⁷Luther, Werke (Walmar), Vol. XXX, Pt. I, p. 193: Preface to the Large Catechism, 1529.

⁴⁸Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. II, p. 10: Sermon on John 2:1-11; cited in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 14.

outward conduct, but actual obedience. Love is shown toward those who are on an equal level, "but honor is shown to one who is higher and includes a kind of fear, that we do not offend him whom he honors."⁴⁹ Parents should be feared as overlords, ordained by God.

But this honor demands, which children are under obligation to show to their parents, that, even if they should ordain something against your will, you nevertheless should be and remain obedient to them.⁵⁰

If children learn to respect authority at home, they will remain law-abiding citizens when they become adults.

However, Luther's sympathetic love for children served him as a sure guide even in his determination to avoid the recurrence of revolt and radicalism. While requiring strict obedience at one time, Luther cautioned parents to temper their discipline with moderation and love. At another hour and in a different mood Luther also urged parents to understand their children. "He who rules with anger makes the evil worse," he pointed out. "Children are naturally so constituted that they would rather be given free rein in their inclinations. And youth is no different." "Experience teaches," he concluded, "that love will effect more than slavish fear and force."⁵¹ Luther was quite aware of the dangers

⁴⁹Exposition of Exodus 20:12, cited in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 33.

⁵⁰Exposition of Genesis 27:4, cited in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 45.

⁵¹Exposition of I John 2:13-14, cited in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 37.

that lie at both extremes in the problem of parental authority and training. "Excessive coddling and indulgence," and "excessive severity and animosity"⁵² are both to be carefully avoided, while at the same time children must be both loved and punished if they are to achieve Christian maturity.

When children are wicked and cause damage and grief, they should be punished, especially when they learn to make clever trades and to steal. And yet it is necessary to observe moderation and restraint, for matters which are purely childish, such as pilfering cherries, apples, peas, nuts, are not to be punished in the same degree as when they would lay hands on gold, clothing and money-chests.⁵³

His own mother once whipped him 'til the blood flowed for stealing a nut, and in school one day he was whipped fifteen times before noon for not knowing a Latin declension; this kind of punishment exceeds the "strokes of love which we owe our children and God has commanded."

Nevertheless, he warned at another time, "if punishment were to be entirely set aside and mercy put into office, the whole country would become filled with scoundrels and the world become a den of robbers."⁵⁴ Young people, says Luther in one of his typically vivid metaphors, are like tinder, "which catches fire very easily, and this is an evil and

⁵²Exposition of I John 2:13-14, cited in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 37.

⁵³From the Table Talk, quoted in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁴Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. IV, p. 217: Sermon on the Fourth Sunday after Trinity, on Luke 6:36-42, 1533.

offensive condition."⁵⁵ In the Large Catechism, written in 1529 with the violence of the Peasants' Revolt still throbbing in his memory, Luther cautioned:

I advise and exhort you as before that by means of warning and threatening, restraint and punishment, children be trained betimes to shun falsehood, and especially to avoid the use of God's name in its support. For where they are allowed to do as they please, no good will result, as is even now evident that the world is worse than it has ever been, and that there is no government, no obedience, no fidelity, no faith, but only daring, unbridled men, whom no teaching or reproof helps.⁵⁶

Children should be constantly urged and incited to honor God, and respect authority. The "true way" to train children is with kindness and love, "for what must be enforced with rods and blows only will not develop into a good breed, and at best they will remain godly under such treatment no longer than while the rod is upon their back."⁵⁷ Children must learn to fear God more than rods and clubs, Luther observed, and to this end are to be punished "in such a way as not to be discouraged."⁵⁸ He advised parents that "when they have punished their disobedient children as they have deserved, they then speak kindly to them again and, as it were, win them back once more."⁵⁹ "Since we are preaching to children,

⁵⁵Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. XI, p. 463: Sermon on St. Michael's Day, from Matthew 18:1-10, 1533.

⁵⁶Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. I: The Second Commandment.

⁵⁷Loc. cit.

⁵⁸Exposition of Psalms 126:5, quoted in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵⁹Exposition of Genesis 9:21, quoted in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 48.

we must also prattle with them."⁶⁰

Thus, Luther appears to have thought of the family as a divine institution, occupying a fundamental relation to both civil and divine government since it possessed the opportunity to train future law-abiding citizens and servants of God. Children are a precious gift of God, over which parents are divinely authorized to exercise authority, but this authority is to be administered in wisdom and love which will prevent injustice, caprice, passionate violence and passionate indulgence. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach respect, love and obedience for parental and civil authority, and to guide the children into a right understanding of orthodox religious truth. Thus children will be prepared to take their places in life as reliable and useful members of society.

3. Schools

When Luther spoke of the relationship between church, home and school he had in mind an overlapping and continuous mutual responsibility. "When schools flourish," he said, "then things go well and the church is secure."⁶¹ "For the church's sake we must have and maintain Christian schools,"

⁶⁰Luther, Berke (Weimar), Vol. 122, Pt. 1: The Large Catechism, the second commandment, 1529.

⁶¹Preserved Smith and Herbert Percival Gallinger, Conversations with Luther (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1918), p. 96.

he continued. The home, likewise, stands in closest support of the schools. "My dear fellow," wrote Luther, "if you have a child that is fit for learning, you are not at liberty to bring it up as you please, nor is it a matter of your discretion to deal with it as you choose."⁶² If a father is in a position to provide the church with a pastor or teacher, or the state with a public official, and he does not, "then the government ought to punish such people altogether in body and goods, or chase them out of the world."⁶³ Some may argue that each parent may train his own sons and daughters rather than send them to schools, but Martin Luther replied, "We see indeed how it goes with this teaching and training."⁶⁴ More and better training is offered by the schools than parents can ever give in their own homes:

Let everyone know, therefore, that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children above all in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are talented have them learn and study something that they may be employed for whatever need there is.⁶⁵

The schools occupy a vital and essential position in the preparation of leaders for both government and church.

⁶²Luther, *Werke* (Weimar), Vol. XX, Pt. II, p. 49: Preface to Menius' *Book on Christian Housekeeping*, 1529.

⁶³*Loc. cit.* "Thou canst serve thy ruler or thy city more with the training of children than if thou buildest castles and cities and collectest the treasures of all the world."

⁶⁴Luther, *Works* (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 122: Letter to Mayors and Aldermen, 1524.

⁶⁵Luther, *Werke* (Weimar), Vol. XX, Pt. I: Large Catechism, the Fourth Commandment, 1529.

In relation to the civil government, Luther spoke directly and openly:

Now the welfare of a city does not consist alone in great treasures, firm walls, beautiful houses, and munitions of war; indeed, where all these abound, and reckless fools come into power, the city sustains the greater injury. But the highest welfare, safety, and power of a city consists in able, learned, wise, upright, cultivated citizens, who can secure, preserve and utilize every treasure and advantage.⁶⁶

It was for this purpose that Luther openly urged compulsory state-supported education:

If we must annually expend large sums on muskets, roads, bridges, dams and the like, in order that the city may have temporal peace and comfort, why should we not apply as much to our poor, neglected youth, in order that they may have a skillful schoolmaster or two?⁶⁷

The same argument held good with Luther for the maintenance of the church. When the church was reformed, it became essential that pastors be learned, wise and trained men, as well as good, orthodox and pious:

Here it depends on persons whom we must educate in schools and universities. Hence the reformation of schools and universities is also necessary, that no cost or trouble is to be spared. This requires especially serious consideration, for if matters are not well in the schools, where persons are to be begotten and educated, no worship will be properly served.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Luther, *Works* (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 111: Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen, 1524.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 106.

⁶⁸Advice of Luther Concerning a Permanent Order of the Christian Congregation of 1520; quoted in Kretzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

A. Aim

Precisely parallel to these two purposes are the formal aims which Luther attaches to the process of education: to equip the student to lead a good life and serve his fellow man. "For to this end you go to school, learn the good arts and are exercised therein," he wrote, "in order that you may in the future serve the community, whether in the church or in worldly government."⁶⁹ A child is sent to school, said Luther, "to study the liberal arts, learn decency, honesty and good morals, that he may become a fine person, fit to serve land and people."⁷⁰ Young people, he believed, could not be trained to the kingdom of God, but through the schools.⁷¹ The practical attitude Luther maintained toward education is revealed in his urging in the "Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen" that boys and girls go to school only part of the day, and in the rest of the time learn a trade or work at home, "so that study and work may go on together, while the children are young and can attend to both."⁷²

⁶⁹Exposition of Genesis 41:45; quoted in Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 114.

⁷⁰Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. II, pp. 97 ff: Sermon on Luke 2:22-32, 1534. "You are not sent to school to remain there, but to study something, and then go out again to serve other people."

⁷¹Ibid., Vol. XIV, pp. 333 f.: Sermon on Matthew 25:31-42, 1530.

⁷²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 123.

B. Teachers

Exactly as Luther found the schools to be of critical importance in maintaining the security of church and state, he assigned to teachers a place of respect and authority. "We ought to conclude," he said, "that among all good works there is none greater or better than to train young people properly."⁷³ Though there were many exceptions, most of the teachers of the schools of Germany were both inept and inadequate. It was a position that had not been accorded public respect and dignity but Luther was ready to recognize the importance of the task and aptitude for it. He called able teachers "paragons," and recognized that they were "rare birds." "It is impossible," he said, "to reward and pay with any money a diligent, pious teacher or master, or whoever it may be who faithfully trains and teaches boys."⁷⁴ He consistently placed teaching and the ministry on an equal plane both of importance and sacredness. "In a city a schoolmaster has as much responsibility as a minister. We can take magistrates, princes and nobles as we find them, but not schools, for schools rule the world."⁷⁵ He even recommended once that ministers spend ten years as schoolmasters before

⁷³Luther, Werke (Erlangen), Vol. XV, p. 463: Sermon on Saint Michael's Day, on Matthew 18:1-10.

⁷⁴Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 173: Sermon on Sending Children to School, 1530.

⁷⁵Smith and Gallinger, op. cit., p. 96, from the Table Talk.

they accept ordination. Together teachers and pastors have "a precious ministry and office, and are the noblest jewels of the church; they preserve the church."⁷⁶ Their position may be a lowly one, but they are "daily, permanent judges," dealing with small young rogues, and transforming them into bishops and mayors.

C. Method

The teaching of religion and the good life was always the foremost aim in Luther's educational thought, and for this purpose he provided the Small Catechism for use in schools, churches and homes. In the Preface Luther outlined the method with which the Catechism should be used for instruction, and again reveals a sure sense of technique dictated by his native sympathy and love for children.⁷⁷

The Catechism was planned by Luther and destined by events to become the keystone of the entire religious educational system of Reformation. Luther insisted that a thorough mastery of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments was absolutely fundamental to all religious understanding and a guarantee of religious orthodoxy. "I myself must

⁷⁶Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. V, p. 225: Of Councils and Churches, 1539.

⁷⁷Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912), pp. 3-8. Another English publication of the Catechism is contained in Joseph Strump, An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1935). The Preface is pp. xi-xv.

read and study it daily," Luther said, "and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and am glad so to remain."⁷⁸ The preface reveals that Luther's plan for the Catechism was somewhat short of the absolute test of orthodoxy and final limit of religious thought which later years made of his work.

Departing from the harsh, mechanical and uninteresting methods of instruction in popular use, Luther urged that the Catechism be used with simplicity and repetition. Teach only one thing at a time, he directed:

When you preach among the learned and judicious, you may show your art, and set these things forth with as many flourishes and turn them as skillfully as you wish; but among the young adhere to one and the same fixed form and manner, and teach them first of all the text ... so that they can say it after you word for word, and commit it to memory.⁷⁹

When everyone had learned the text, Luther suggested that they "be taught the sense also, that they may know what it means."⁸⁰ "It is not necessary to take up all the parts at once," he cautioned, "but take one after the other. When they well understand the First Commandment, proceed to the Second, and thus continue; otherwise they will be overburdened, and be able to retain nothing well."⁸¹ Advancing from the simple to the complex, the nearer to the more remote, Luther suggested

⁷⁸Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. XXX, Pt. I, p. 183: Preface to the Large Catechism, 1529.

⁷⁹Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, p. 5.

⁸⁰Loc. cit.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 5 f.

that when the children have reached the end of the Short Catechism, they may begin the Large Catechism. "Especially give most attention to the commandment or part which is most neglected among your people," he recommended, suggesting that the teacher urge the Fourth Commandment among children, and the Seventh Commandment, which forbids stealing, when teaching people among whom "all kinds of unfaithfulness and thieving are frequent."⁸² Though he freely invoked avoidance of divine punishment as a motive for learning and observing religious principles, Luther pointed out that "you need not make any law in this matter, as the pope does; only set forth clearly the benefit and harm, the necessity and use, the danger and blessing."⁸³ "Our office is a different thing now from what it was under the pope," he pointed out: "it has now become earnest and salutary."⁸⁴

In his Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen, Luther recognized that "the young must leap and jump ... because they have a natural desire for it that should not be restrained,"⁸⁵ and in the teaching of religion he recognized the principles of variation and natural interest. In teaching the Catechism, he pointed out that the purpose was not merely that the children learn to recite the words, but suggested that they be questioned, point after point, in order

⁸²Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, p. 8.

⁸³Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁸⁵Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 122.

to discover whether they understand the material. When the children have learned the Lord's Prayer, he recommended that they be asked: "What does it mean that you say: Our Father in Heaven," and required to explain that God is a heavenly father much like earthly fathers. "What does it mean: Hallowed be Thy name?" the teacher is to ask, and if the child replied that God's name is to be guarded lest it be dishonored, he is to be asked, "How, then, is it dishonored?"⁸⁶

For memorizing Scripture, Luther suggested that the Christian belief be reduced to two categories, Faith and Love, and that each classification be represented by an imaginary "pouch," the Faith-bag being golden and the Love-purse being silver. The sack of Faith should have two smaller bags in it. Into the first are placed verses of Scripture indicating how man has failed and sinned, such as Romans 5:12 and Psalms 51:7. Into the second are deposited the verses of redemption, forgiveness and salvation, such as John 3:16 and Romans 13:8-10. These texts are to be learned from the sermons at church, reading in the Bible, and from lessons at school and home. In the silver Love-sack there are also two purses, one for texts on doing good and one for texts showing God's love for us. Galatians 5:13 and Matthew 25:40 would be two silver groschen for the first purse, and Matthew 5:11 and Hebrews 12:6 two Saxon guilders for the second. "Let no one consider

⁸⁶Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. VI, p. 174: Preface to the German Mass and Order of Service, 1526.

himself too sophisticated and despise such child's play," warned Luther. "When Christ wanted to train men he had to become a man. If we are to train children, we must also become children with them."⁸⁷

D. Curriculum

(1) Scripture

Precisely as the Scripture was central to Martin Luther's religious philosophy, it was central to all of his thought concerning education. In so far as Luther had any plan for the curriculum of the schools, it was to place at its core the study of the Bible. He had but two aims for all of education, the cultivation of religious life and service of fellow men, united under the principle of orthodoxy and authority; everything he said about the study of the schools, scattered and random though it may have been, was related to these two definitive aims.

Above all things, both in elementary and higher schools, the principal and most common lesson should be the Holy Scripture and the Gospel for the young boys. And would to God that every city would also have a school for girls, wherein the girls might hear the Gospel every day for an hour ... Should not every Christian person by his ninth or tenth year know the entire holy Gospel, in which his name and life are contained?⁸⁸

⁸⁷Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. VI, pp. 175 f.

⁸⁸Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 181 f.: To the Christian Mobility, 1520.

Indeed, "everything must come to corruption that is not, without intermission, engaged in the study of the Word of God."⁸⁹

(2) Languages

In relating the study of ancient languages to this central core of all curricula, Luther gave the study an impetus toward the sterile sort of attention given to languages by Protestant educators like Melanchthon and Sturm. Greek, Hebrew and Latin were not mental gymnastics for Martin Luther, but the key to the orthodox understanding of the Scriptures: "Although the Gospel has come and daily comes through the Holy Spirit, it has come by means of the languages, and through them it must increase and be preserved." In his open Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen he put his concept vividly:

The languages are the scabbard in which the Word of God is sheathed; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; the cask in which this wine is kept; the chamber in which this food is stored. And, to borrow a figure from the gospel itself, they are the baskets in which this bread and fish and fragments are preserved. If through neglect we lose the language (which God forbid), we will not only lose the Gospel, but it will finally come to pass that we will lose also the ability to speak and write either Latin or German.⁹⁰

Luther was convinced that the languages not only preserved the Gospel, but kept it from corruption. The Hebrew tongue,

⁸⁹Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, pp. 151 f.: To the Christian Nobility, 1520.

⁹⁰Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 114 f.

he observed, is despised because of impiety, or perhaps because of its difficulty, but "without this language there can be no understanding of scripture."⁹¹ Latin itself he regarded as a practical tool because of the many Latin books that were becoming available, so that "a man at present can learn more in three years than formerly in twenty."⁹² Every pastor and teacher should be acquainted with Latin, and "if such a boy who has learned Latin afterwards works at a trade, you will have him in reserve, to labor as a pastor in case of need."⁹³ Language, moreover, was for conversation and imparting real knowledge, and the ancient "science" of grammar did not greatly interest Luther: "Printed words are dead," he said, "spoken words are living." There are two kinds of knowledge, he pointed out, one of words, and the other of things. "Whoever has no knowledge of the things will not be helped by the knowledge of the words," he concluded, for he had heard a great deal of polished eloquence that had no content. "This I say: if the subject is not studied with the grammar, one will never become a good teacher. For, as someone has said, the teacher's or preacher's discourse should be born, not in his mouth, but in his heart."⁹⁴

⁹¹Smith and Gallinger, op. cit., p. 181.

⁹²Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 154: Sermon on Sending Children to School.

⁹³Loc. cit.

⁹⁴quoted (without documentation) in Painter, op. cit., p. 158.

(3) Logic

Rhetoric and dialectic, the medieval studies of scholastic logic, Luther approved only as they showed how to use knowledge, and even in this admission he insisted that simple language was always best. As an aid to clear, well-reasoned preaching and teaching, the study of logic he considered to be legitimate, "but now neither speaking nor preaching is taught on the basis of them, and the whole thing has become a disputation and an empty talk."⁹⁵ As long as dialectic remained a practical aid, Luther would agree that it might be helpful, but his position in this respect was always compromised by his basic theological premise that in relation to religion every logical conclusion must be left aside.

(4) Music

"I do not hold the opinion that all arts are to be completely discarded through the Gospel, as some super-spiritual people have it," Luther wrote in the crucial year of 1525, "but I would like to see all arts, especially music, placed in the service of Him who has given and created them."⁹⁶ Luther's love of music was remarkable, and once more his native sympathy and taste led him to affirming a constructive position which his theological position might have

⁹⁵Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. II, p. 147: To the Christian Nobility, 1520.

⁹⁶Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 284: First Preface to Walther's Hymn Book of 1525.

denied. "To man alone before all others has been granted speech combined with the voice," he said, "in order that he might know that he should praise God in word and music, namely to be heard in praises, and so that his words are mingled with a lovely melody."⁹⁷ Luther himself possessed a good voice, and played well on the guitar and flute; the tributes he paid to music are many and charming. "The devil is a melancholy spirit and ... takes to flight as soon as one begins to sing."⁹⁸ At another time he said, "Next to theology, I accord to music the chief place and the highest honor."⁹⁹ It was at his insistence that music was reintroduced into the evangelical churches from which all liturgy had been eliminated during the early Reformation. The number of the hymns he actually composed is much smaller than might be thought from their tremendous influence. Thirty-seven are attributed to him, and of these only five are his own, the rest being translations and elaborations of Latin and German songs. But the "battle hymn of the Reformation," A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, was long believed to have superhuman power, and his opponents complained that the people sang themselves into Luther's doctrine, the Jesuit Conzenius saying, "The hymns of Luther have killed more souls than his books and speeches."¹⁰⁰ His really original contribution to

⁹⁷Preface to the Hymns on the Passion of Christ, quoted by Kretzmann (op. cit., p. 86).

⁹⁸Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), Vol. I, p. 88.

⁹⁹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 348.

¹⁰⁰Hosmer, op. cit., p. 196.

the schools of Germany was Luther's insistence that music become a part of the regular curriculum of all schools: never before had children been regularly taught to sing.

One must at all hazards retain it in the schools. A schoolmaster who cannot sing is unworthy of his notice, and I would not ordain a young man who had not learned the art of song at school. It is a splendid discipline, since it tends to make people gentler, more virtuous and rationally minded.¹⁰¹

In setting up the grammar schools of the Reformation throughout Germany, Melancthon and his assistants rigidly conformed to this wish of the Reformer, making singing an integral part of the curriculum of all the schools, and music an intrinsic feature of Protestant culture.

(5) Classics

About the standard humanistic classical curriculum of studies, Luther had very little to say. It would have been his pleasure to discard Aristotle completely, for the Stagirite philosopher had caused him enough difficulty in his days at Erfurt. He was acquainted with Cicero and Cato, Terence and Plautus from his own student days, and though he found them of little importance in his later thinking, he always retained a fond appreciation of the Fables of Aesop. "It is by the providence of God that the writings of Cato and Aesop have remained in the schools," he wrote in 1536. "Next to the Bible they are, in my judgment, the best; better than

¹⁰¹ Luther, Wischreden (Weimar), Vol. I, p. 490.

those of all the philosophers and jurists."¹⁰² During his residence at the Coburg Castle in 1530 he used many of his leisure hours in revising the edition published by Steinhewel in the last quarter of the fifteenth century for use in the schools. Luther's chief complaint with the text was that it included a number of ribald stories from the Facetiae of Poggio, whom Luther derisively called "the shameful German Aesop." Those who invent and read such stories, said Luther, "are pigs, and remain pigs, before which we should not cast pearls." The edition Luther made is now only a partial fragment and contains only about a dozen of the Aesop tales, but in the preface Luther expressed his disbelief in the authorship or even existence of Aesop, and regarded the stories as the fruit of the practical wisdom of the ancient sages. Men hate nothing more than the direct truth, he observed, but these stories tell the truth in veiled fashion, teaching men through the mouths of beasts what they would not hear through the mouths of men.¹⁰³

(6) History

Luther also saw a tremendous educational value in the newly explored science of history, and commented on the possibilities of the subject in his preface to Link's translation of Capella's Historical Commentaries on the Recent History of

¹⁰²Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), Vol. III, p. 355.

¹⁰³James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925), Vol. IV, p. 103.

Italy.¹⁰⁴ The educational value of history is that "it supplies with illustrations, and portrays, as it were, before our eyes, what the words convey to the ear."¹⁰⁵ For Luther history has a moral value as well, for to his mind the story of the past is nothing else than a reflection of God's government of the world, "showing how God maintains, governs, hinders, advances, punishes and honors men, according as each one has deserved good or evil."¹⁰⁶ But history is of little value unless it is truthfully written, and for this task we need highly gifted men who will fearlessly write the truth:

Most men write in such a way that according to the wishes of their rulers or friends, they pass over the vices or degeneracy of their times, or put the best construction upon them; on the other hand, through partiality for their fatherland and hostility to foreigners, they unduly magnify insignificant virtues, and eulogize or defame according to their preferences or prejudices. In this way histories become beyond measure untrustworthy, and God's work is obscured. Since history describes nothing else than the ways of God, that is, grace and anger, which we should believe as if they stood in Scripture, it ought to be written with extreme care, fidelity and truth.¹⁰⁷

Luther himself drew up a historical table for reference, under the title Supputatio Annorum Mundi, beginning with creation and ending with 1541, which shows a wide range of

¹⁰⁴Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. I, pp. 383 ff., 1538.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 383.

¹⁰⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 484.

historical information.¹⁰⁸ "Historians," said Luther, "are the most useful people, and most excellent teachers, whom we can never sufficiently honor, praise and thank."¹⁰⁹

* * * * *

Assembled and read in the twentieth century, many of these educational concepts of Martin Luther appear startlingly modern, if the insistent demand for religious orthodoxy and political authority be overlooked. The consistency of these notions with the New Theology is basically the natural integrity of the man who insisted that though his own spirit had been set free the common man could not be trusted with freedom, and education should be administered for the purpose of fitting men for orthodox religious faith and obedient citizenship. There is no systematized philosophy, no sense of the implications of these principles for the contemporary people of Germany, no attempt to translate these random thoughts into definitive action. The explosive situation confronting the early Reformation demanded immediate, desperate, conservative entrenchment: "the world, the flesh and the devil" were not ready for the educational system that lay unrecognized, even by himself, in the mind of Martin Luther. The implications of the impassioned appeal to the mayors and aldermen of Germany in the days of terrible uncertainty in

¹⁰⁸ Mackinnon, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 102, footnote. The outline appears in the Weimar edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 22 f.

¹⁰⁹ Luther, Werke (Weimar), Vol. I, p. 484.

1524 when Germany was tottering on the brink of the Peasants' Revolt, were lost in the headlong rush of events which made clear the absolute need of firm control. Nevertheless, though destined to be smothered under the intellectual control and religious intolerance of Protestant Scholasticism for many generations, the nascent ideal of the Reformation rings across the centuries with the same passionate insight with which it was written:

Therefore, my dear sirs, I beg you to let my labor bear fruit with you. And though there be some who think me too insignificant to follow my advice, or who look down upon me as one condemned by tyrants: still let them consider that I am not seeking my own interest, but that of all Germany. And even if I were a fool, and should hit upon something good, no wise man should think it a disgrace to follow me. And even if I were a Turk and a heathen, and it should yet appear that my advice was advantageous, not for myself, but for Christianity, no reasonable person would despise my counsel. Sometimes a fool has given better advice than a whole company of wise men. Moses received instruction from Jethro.

Herewith I commend you all to the grace of God. May He soften your hearts and kindle therein a deep interest in behalf of the poor, wretched and neglected youth; and through the blessing of God may you so counsel and aid them as to attain to a happy Christian social order in respect to both body and soul, with all fulness and abounding plenty, to the praise and honor of God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Luther, Works (Holman), Vol. IV, p. 130: Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen.

CHAPTER X

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CHAPTER X

REFORMATION IN RETREAT

The Peasants' Revolt was the test of the New Theology. Zest, buoyancy and freshness ebbed out of the Reformation after the wrath of radicalism and the violence of revolt had spent their force and the evangelical movement lay deflated over the hills and rivers of Germany. Philip Melancthon became grimly determined to preserve the fruits of the Reformation at any cost, and losing his confidence in the future retreated to the cultural patterns which he had learned as a student of the classics in his brilliant boyhood. Martin Luther withdrew from the world in which he had fought so brilliantly as literally as if he had retired into one of the medieval monasteries which he had been instrumental in closing.

1. Luther's Collapse

Luther withdrew from the peasants, with whom he had earlier been so intimately identified. He adopted the maxim, "It does not pay to pipe too much to the mob, or it will too readily lose its head." In his later addresses he frequently works himself into a veritable rage against the mob, calling

it sarcastically "Meister Omnes" and "Many-headed Monster." Medieval rule, he began to assert, was the best that had ever been devised for the control of the peasant class: "If compulsion and the law of the strong arm ruled as in the past, so that if a man dared to grumble he got a box on the ear - things would fare better; otherwise it is all of no use."¹ In his later sermons on Moses he presented serfdom as a desirable state: "If society is to endure ... it will be necessary to reestablish it."² He complained to Melancthon that the "peasants and wretched folk" yawned openly while he preached in his usual style, but that they took interest "when you told them stories."³ He appeared to cherish his love of music as a distinctly middle-class possession. "I rejoice that God has deprived peasants of this great gift and consolation," he gloated, "that they cannot hear music."⁴ Luther also withdrew from the nobility, who, like the peasants, had been to blame for the terrors of the Revolt. In counselling a pastor who had a prince in his congregation, he advised, "Do not address your discourse to the prince, but to the simplest and lowest of your listeners."⁵ He contradicted his earlier attribution of God's support to the causes of the

¹Hartmann Grisar, Martin Luther (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1930), p. 560.

²Loc. cit.

³Franz Funck-Brentano, Luther (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), p. 281.

⁴E. Paschal, The Social Basis of the Reformation (London: Watts and Company, 1933), p. 149.

⁵Funck-Brentano, op. cit., p. 281.

nobility: "Christ has no intention of fighting the poor and humble, but attacks only the great and powerful, the kings and princes."⁶

Luther's theology, as well, was profoundly affected, and his religious attitudes assumed strange perversions. At the table one day the conversation turned to Cicero, who had observed that Homer in his poems endowed the gods with the virtues and vices of men. "True, God was great and powerful," commented the Reformer who had once put all his trust in God simply because he was superbly omniscient and omnipotent; "He was good and powerful and all that sort of thing; but he was stupid."⁷ Moreover, he was a tyrant: Moses was his slave. "Do you know how God manages to stay ruler of mankind?" he asked at another time. "He paralyzes the old and blinds the young and thus remains master."⁸ Of course, Luther maintained, God was good. "But I should not feel safe," he continued, "if I did not know the fifth commandment which says: 'Thou shalt not kill.' What a consolation! Gadzooks!" At least this is the way his companions report the conversation: "Gadzooks! God is not going to take a delight in killing me when he himself forbids it!"⁹ To Adam God made promises that he never kept, and prescribed ceremonies which he later altered. One day he was asked why God created man at all. That

⁶Martin Luther, Tischreden (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus, 1912-1921), #240b.

⁷Ibid., #2115b: "Deus est stultissimus."

⁸Ibid., #963.

⁹Ibid., #942.

was a simple matter to Luther, who loved to express himself in crude metaphor in later life: "A great noble has to have chamber pots in his house; his other vases looked all the finer by comparison and the splendor of his house was enhanced."¹⁰

It was not the Luther who boldly proclaimed to the world that were it not for Christ men would never have known God except in his wrath, who admitted blandly that Christ was guilty of fornication. "Christ committed adultery first of all with the woman at the well about whom St. John tells us. Was not everybody about him saying: 'Whatever had he been doing with her?' Secondly, with Mary Magdalene, and thirdly with the woman taken in adultery whom he dismissed so lightly."¹¹ Once, no doubt upon just such an occasion as this, someone complained that Luther was not being fair to God. "Quite true," answered the now crotchety old man, "but what prophet has not insulted God?"¹²

The sensitiveness to sin that had been a definitive factor in Luther's New Theology also underwent modification. "If God did not forgive sins, I would throw him out of the window," he observed.¹³ "For that matter, if God put evil into the world and wished man to be unhappy, it was in order

¹⁰Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #2164a.

¹¹Ibid., #1472.

¹²Ibid., #2505b.

¹³Ibid., #2007.

to make us long for the world to come."¹⁴ Sin was also given to us by God: "Therefore he made midges, fleas and lice to sting and bite us; to humble our pride he made the devil," and if he sometimes behaved toward us very differently from a father, it was to humble our pride.¹⁵ It might appear that Martin Luther had come to the threshold of the conviction that he had to sin in the interests of God.

One day one of his younger admirers complained of Luther's blindly literal interpretation of the Scriptures. "Verily, it is incredible," replied the doctor, "but since God has said it I will believe it. So tenaciously should we cling to the Word revealed by the Gospel that were I to see all the angels of heaven coming down to me to tell me something different, not only would I not be tempted to doubt a single syllable, but I would shut my eyes and stop my ears, for they would not deserve either to be seen or heard."¹⁶ "If," he added at another time, "in poring over the Gospel, I could prevent myself from bringing my well-considered judgment to bear upon it, I should have accomplished much; for one should beware of speculating on these matters and merely lay hold of Christ."¹⁷

In his later years Luther was often terrified by anxiety over the state of his salvation. This was not the same

¹⁴Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #2652b.

¹⁵Ibid., #2163b.

¹⁶Ibid., #1687.

¹⁷Punck-Brentano, op. cit., p. 246.

man who had once promised salvation by grace and justification by faith to any who would believe. "I cannot deny it; I am often afraid and tremble; what agony!"¹⁸

The pleasant home life continued, brightened by children and dominated by the efficient Kathe who largely supported the family and provided the setting for the Table Talk by boarding university students. Doctor Luther spent many hours reminiscing with old friends, and some battling with new enemies. He essayed some new projects, like that of converting the Jews in Germany to Christianity, but their failure drove him deeper into his protective shell where the outside world could no longer reach him. He offered a few courses at the university and continued to preach at the parish church, but he had lost brilliance, persuasiveness and attraction. Except for a few emergencies from the little world of Wittenberg, such as the unhappy display of temper and intractability in the conference with Ulrich Zwingli at Marburg, and the unfortunate approval of the second marriage of Philip of Hesse without benefit of terminating the first, Martin Luther had withdrawn from the arena of life long before he passed away in 1546.

2. Melanchthon to the Rescue

The man to whom the responsibility of leadership was destined to fall had already stepped into the field.

¹⁸Luther, Tischreden (Weimar), #459.

In the age-long struggle of mankind to achieve progress there have always been two kinds of reformers. One strains at the leash of traditionalism, seizes insights immediately and intuitively with clarity and completeness, can endure no delay, and insists on striking boldly out to the immediate goal no matter what may be the suffering and destruction. Convictions may need later to be revised, but the star burns brightly for a moment, and then is gone, leaving the world gasping at its brilliance. The other class is calmer, less violent, and less known to the popular enthusiasm that makes heroes for the pages of history. Tradition for this class of reformers is a base of operations, changes come slowly with maturity of deliberation and are so carefully wrought that retraction is seldom possible, even if the course of action has been in error. Insights for this reformer are intellectual rather than spiritual, and while they suffer from the human weaknesses of the former they avoid the brash assurance of the latter.

Martin Luther had had his career through history, and had released forces beyond his control. It was the task of Philip Melanckthon to build, entrench and conserve. His person marks the turning point in the history of the Reformation. When the fatal and unpremeditated effects of the New Theology on learning and educational progress began to become apparent, when radicals of all kinds began to preach the uselessness of the sciences on the ground that the Holy Spirit would lead men into truth without study, and when it became quite clear

that the evangelical movement would soon disappear because no leadership was being trained and no schooling given to the common people upon which to build an evangelical faith, it was Melanchthon who set himself to rescue the educational organization of Germany from catastrophe.

When the threads of cause and effect are untangled, the personality of Philip Melanchthon becomes the decisive factor in the creation of a Protestant Germany far different from that implied in the New Theology of Martin Luther; it could have been no other way, for Melanchthon differed basically from the stormy and brilliant Reformer. Melanchthon was first of all by training and disposition a humanist, a man of culture steeped in the ancient classics, for whom mildness, moderation, caution, reasonableness, prudence and dignity were essential virtues. His suavity of tongue betrayed an inbred love of peace and concealed the incisive penetration of the scholar's mind.

The story that records an incident in Melanchthon's dispute with Eck may be legend, but it is completely true to character. Eck proposed a perplexing and intricate sophism, and after a few moments of silence Melanchthon said, "I will give you an answer tomorrow."

"There is no merit or honor in that," replied Eck, the gladiator, "unless you can answer me immediately."

"My dear doctor," replied Melanchthon with complete self-control, "I do not seek my own glory in this matter, but truth; tomorrow, if God will, you shall hear me."

Though never proclaiming his conclusions in the vigorous, popular style that made Luther a popular hero, Melancthon's reticence and restraint were not marks of timidity or lack of clarity. When peace seemed to be in the balance, Melancthon was inclined to yield too much principle for the sake of outer calm, but he was capable of laying a plan and following it through with a thoroughness that in another man would have been stubbornness. Erasmus is said to have attempted to tempt Melancthon away from the Reformation with the promise of high churchly preferment from Rome. "For my part," replied Melancthon, "I cannot with a safe conscience condemn the sentiments of Luther, however I may be charged with folly or superstition."¹⁹ During the infamous Leipzig Interim in which both Catholic and Evangelical parties were commanded to cease upholding their opposing beliefs as if in a human vacuum, Melancthon rebelled:

"Though threatened with war and destruction we must still adhere to the Word of God, and not deny acknowledged truth." Breaking the order not to teach or write during the Interim, Melancthon published a letter in which he stated unequivocally that he would continue to defend and preach what he considered to be the truth. "As for myself," he declared, "I am ready, by the grace of God, to depart hence, and if need be, to suffer."²⁰

¹⁹Anonymous, Sketches of the Life of Philip Melancthon (Hartford: D. F. Robinson and Company, 1830), pp. 65 f.

²⁰Ibid., p. 84.

Though his differed profoundly from Luther's mood, Melanchthon had been thoroughly trained in the evangelical movement. He and Luther were constant companions at Wittenberg, and the path leading across the gardens between their houses was well worn. He assisted Luther at the Leipzig debate, and in 1521 Luther published the first edition of Melanchthon's Theological Commonplaces, the first Protestant work on dogmatic theology. They worked together in planning the visitation of churches and schools in 1527, and in 1529 Melanchthon attended the Diet of Spire and the Marburg Colloquy as Luther's counsellor and second. It was Melanchthon who wrote the Augsburg Confession at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, a document that has been called the "Magna Charta of Lutheranism," and which was approved by Luther.

The Confession was presented to the emperor, Charles V, at the Diet as a statement of the evangelical faith designed to encourage the determined Catholic monarch to think better of the Protestant position. It is a sign of Melanchthon's authorship that the statement attempted to minimize the differences between the Protestants and the Catholics. Part I is a statement of the chief elements of the New Theology, claiming that the Protestant position is firmly grounded in Augustine and the ancient Fathers, and that the chief differences between it and the Catholic stand are due to medieval corruptions which the Protestants repudiate. The position of the Lutherans was clearly distinguished from that of the radical sects, and every effort was made to show that the New

Theology was free from all the usual pattern of heresies. The chief differences between the two systems are practical rather than theological, Melancthon pointed out in conclusion:

This is about the sum of doctrine among us, in which can be seen that there is nothing which is discrepant with the Scriptures, or with the Catholic Church, or even with the Roman Church, so far as that Church is known from the writings of the fathers. This being the case, they judge us harshly who insist that we shall be regarded as heretics. But the dissension is concerning traditions and abuses, which without any certain authority have crept into the churches; in which things it would be a becoming leniency on the part of the bishops that they should bear with us, since even the Canons are not so severe as to demand the same rights everywhere.²¹

These abuses are discussed in Part II: the celibacy of priests, mass, confession, prohibition of meats on fast days, monastic vows, and the extent of ecclesiastical power. The argument throughout is typically humanist, and is a direct appeal to reason rather than revelation. The commandments of God to good and useful life and true worship are obscured by the claim that monks alone are in a state of perfection, especially when men can clearly see that their alleged perfection has no relationship to ordinary goodness of life. The people are confused: they hear celibacy exalted, and therefore when they marry they offend their own consciences; they hear that only beggars gain the kingdom of God, yet they are forced by society to own property and buy and sell; some people become so bewildered that they leave wedlock and desert the

²¹part I, Article 22.

government, to live as monks, and others can see that homes are disrupted and the government weakened by their so-called holy action.

These things only have been enumerated which it seemed necessary to say, that it might be understood that in doctrine and ceremonials among us there is nothing received contrary to scriptures, or to the Catholic Church, inasmuch as it is manifest that we have diligently taken heed that no new and godless doctrines should creep into our churches.²²

Though Luther felt that the Confession was too soft-spoken and because of its modifications not altogether an accurate statement of the New Theology, he never criticized Melancthon for the growing theological differences between them. Melancthon published his own commentary on Romans in 1532, and after meeting with Caspar Bucer at Cassel to discuss the Lord's Supper in 1534, he began to depart more and more from the domination of Luther's theology. In 1535 he waged a great verbal battle with Cordatus in defense of his liberal views of justification, and in the same year he brought out his second edition of the Loci Communes, in which he expressed his growing moderation of the original principles of Luther. Accusations of synergism followed immediately, and the ensuing theological disputes of 1536 and 1537, together with the difficulties over the bigamy of Philip of Hesse left Melancthon prostrated with fatigue and discouragement in 1540. It was the prayers and will of Martin Luther which

brought him back to health: together they went to the Diet of Worms and in 1541 his salary at the university was increased at the insistence of Doctor Luther. On February 22, 1546, it was Philip Melancthon who delivered the immortal funeral oration at the burial of Martin Luther.

Yet long before Luther's death Melancthon found himself dragged from the study and classroom and plunged into the practical affairs of the Reformation. Melancthon's heart was in the lecture hall, and his interest was chiefly in the students with whom he studied and counselled. It was to protect his central interest in education that he refused to take a doctorate in theology, and in spite of continued urging by Luther consistently declined to preach except to his students who could not understand the German sermons in the parish church. "Thou knowest," he wrote to Spalatin,

the circumstances that occasioned me to give a theological course. I first began it in order, as Baccalaureus ad Biblia to conform to established usage, nor had I then the most distant presentiment of the turn that matters were destined to take. My exegesis was not finished when Dr. Martin went to Worms; and so long as he continued absent, it was not possible for me to give up these lectures. Thus it has come to pass that I have dangled from that cliff for more than two years. I yesterday finished John's gospel, and this appears to me to be an appropriate time to make a change in respect to the lectures. I cannot hesitate to follow whither thou leadest, even to become a keeper of cattle. Nevertheless, I could wish in this one respect to be free.²³

It was as a classical humanist, living and teaching the ancient

²³Karl von Hauner, *Geschichte der Pädagogik* (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1877), p. 181.

authors, that Melanchthon found most happiness, and it was such that he always remained, in whatever field of labor the cause called him. Thus it was that the school system which emergency called him to create for the Reformation became classical, dry and sterile.

Philip Melanchthon was a typical scholar and professor of the classics: idealistic because his studies kept him too far removed from the practical problems of the day to be realistic, scrupulously punctual in his engagements, extremely regular in his study habits, and totally impractical. He went to bed early in the evening, and rose at midnight to study through the quiet morning hours undisturbed while the rest of the world was sleeping. He was occasionally found by his visitors holding a book in one hand and rocking his child's cradle with the other. Presents of odd coins and curios from far countries were showered upon him, and invariably he would give them away to the first person who might ask for them. It is said that one visitor tried Melanchthon by asking for the whole collection, and that the professor immediately granted the request. He never read his mail until the evening of the next day so that the news contained in them would not upset him because of its emergency. His scholarly idealism is revealed in an incident that has become legendary. During the difficult year of 1524 several of the evangelical leaders had met together to discuss their problems, and were so overwhelmed by the magnitude of them that they decided to turn the discussion into a prayer circle. Melanchthon

was profoundly depressed. He was called out of the meeting, and while he was gone happened across a number of the officers of the parish church of Wittenberg in prayer with their families and friends. When he returned his attitude had changed so remarkably that Luther exclaimed, "What now! what has happened to you, Philip?"

"Sirs," replied Melanchthon, "I have seen our noble protectors. Let us not be discouraged; they will prevail over every foe."

"And pray," replied Luther, thinking that perhaps a detachment of soldiers had come from the elector, "who and where are they?"

"Oh!" explained Melanchthon, "they are the wives of our parishioners and their little children, whose prayers I have just witnessed."²⁴

For forty-two years Melanchthon lectured at Wittenberg on nearly every philosophical, philological and historical subject in the contemporary curriculum. With the fourth decade of the century Wittenberg became the most popular of the German universities,²⁵ and during the last fifteen years of his lifetime Wittenberg was the central university of Protestantism and Master Phillipus the soul of all scholarly pursuits.²⁶ Through this patient and scholarly labor, the task

²⁴ Anonymous, op. cit., pp. 89 f.

²⁵ Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1895), pp. 42 f.

²⁶ Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities and University Study (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 33.

for which he was preeminently fitted by both ability and inclination, Melanchthon made one of his three major contributions to the pattern of education in post-Reformation Germany: the creation through his pupils of a new teaching profession to meet the needs of higher education.²⁷ His other two contributions were of a more influential nature and in the area of the grammar and preparatory schools, an area for which Melanchthon was disqualified by lack of training and narrowness of interest. Because he was the only man in the inner circle of the Reformation who was concerned at all with the training of children, this humanist scholar of the classics became the one who laid down the principles for the organization and curriculum of schools throughout Protestant Germany, and this reluctant theologian who sat on the bench of the Inquisition in Saxony became the man who wrote the elementary textbooks, which remained in use for centuries, for the teaching of Latin and Greek, grammar, rhetoric and logic, physics and ethics and theological dogmatics.

Melanchthon was drawn into the practical phases of elementary education almost by accident. The actual impetus for this labor was supplied by the first Visitation and the plan for schools that he proposed in the concluding section of his visitation report, but the first suggestion of Melanchthon's new role came in the founding of the Protestant gymnasium at Nuremberg in 1526. Nuremberg was the first to

²⁷Friedrich Paulsen, *German Education Past and Present* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 59.

respond to Luther's appeal of 1524 to the aldermen of the German cities in behalf of Christian schools, and invited Melanchthon to become the rector of the new gymnasium which they proposed to open formally on October 17, 1524. Nuremberg was a famous city, home of Albrecht Dürer and Hans Sachs, had long had four Latin schools, and was the home of many artists and scholars, but Melanchthon declined the offer to become the head of the first Protestant high school of the city. Melanchthon was gently blamed for being the cause of delay in opening the school, and on December 3, 1524, he again rejected an invitation to Nuremberg, but the next fall he visited Nuremberg with Camerarius and gave directions for organizing the proposed school and counselled in the selection of professors. In the spring of 1526 the school was opened with Camerarius as rector and professor of Greek, Eoban Hessus to teach rhetoric, Michael Noting as professor of Latin, and John Schoner, instructor in mathematics. On May 23rd Melanchthon delivered the inaugural oration at the opening ceremonies of the school into which a great deal of his counsel and interest had been poured.²⁸ No art, no industry, no production of the earth, not even the light of conscience, Melanchthon said, is of more value than learning, for by it good laws, courts and religion are maintained. There are some who do not know the value of learning, and others who are so wicked as to think that their own power can

²⁸James William Richard, Philip Melanchthon (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), pp. 130 ff.

be advanced by keeping people in ignorance, but the distinguished city of Nuremberg has demonstrated that it understands the worth of education in conducting a happy city.

What shall I say of the bishops who have been appointed by the emperors to superintend learning? The colleges of priests were scholars to whom leisure and endowments were given that they might serve as teachers. Nor did it appear unfortunate that letters should be cultivated by this class of persons. But now we behold none more hostile to the liberal arts than the sacerdotal fraternity.²⁹

The people of Nuremberg have shown the way to Germany by furnishing an asylum to education, which has strayed into exile. Melanchthon closed with a prayer: "I will pray Christ to bless this most important work and to crown your counsels and the diligence of those who study here with his favor."³⁰

A. School Conditions as Discovered by the Visitations

It was the Visitations made by Melanchthon, Luther and other parties through the territory of Saxony that first brought to the attention of both the townspeople and the leaders of the Reformation the urgent need for immediate correction of the desperate plight of the schools. The Peasants' Revolt had swept away the monasteries and schools of the Roman Church, and nothing had been put in their place. In the Electorate of Saxony at the time of the Visitation of 1528-29

²⁹Philippi Melanthonis, *Opera* (Halle and Brunswick; C. A. Schnietschke and Sons, 1834-1850), Vol. II, pp. 108 f.

³⁰Loc. cit.

there were only twenty-one schools in one hundred and forty-six parishes. The inspection of Meissen in 1540 showed twenty-five schools in five hundred parishes, Thuringia had six schools for nearly two hundred parishes, and in the eighty-six parishes of Merseburg there were two schools as late as 1544.³¹

Melanchthon made a second trip through Thuringia in the winter of 1528 reforming churches and schools, appointing superintendents, establishing consistories, and putting competent pastors in charge of the village parishes.³² It was a long, discouraging and painful process that Melanchthon was launching upon, but as time went on and he saw the happy results of scattered efforts, he was encouraged to sink himself deeper and deeper into the task of providing evangelical Germany with basic cultural training for all its church members. Results were slow to appear, and Melanchthon spent most of the rest of his life making beginnings; it remained for others to carry the plans forward. In 1556 there were only seven grammar schools in Saxony, and when a survey was made in Nassau in 1552, it was discovered that with but one exception there was no sexton in the whole district who could read, and this one had no inclination to conduct a school.³³

One of the most difficult problems was securing and

³¹Charles Leonidas Robbins, Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 25.

³²Richard, op. cit., p. 162.

³³Robbins, op. cit., p. 25.

providing for competent teachers. The record of the parish of Pratau in the district of Wittenberg states that the combination sexton-schoolmaster had neglected the school so thoroughly that the attendance had fallen from twenty-two to three in four years. The report of visitors shows that in another town in the Wittenberg area the pastor and the sexton had "good commendation" but a "poor school,"³⁴ with three boys in attendance. By the Visitation of 1534 a sexton next Leisnig is described as "acting contrary to God's Word," and as being a "drunkard and wanton." "If he does not improve between now and next St. Michael's Day," was the warning, "he is to be removed without further delay."³⁵ The effect of the warning is not known.

But when schoolteachers were accused of neglect they were almost certain to reply with justification that their salary did not enable them to live without seeking extra means of support. In 1557 the teachers in Saxony were forbidden to make and sell brandy, and forced to seek other means of supplementing their professional salary. There was no uniform or single provision for the income of teachers, who were paid partly in tuition fees, partly from grants from the general treasury of the church, with the understanding that the teacher would give some religious instruction, partly from town funds, free dwelling, furniture, garden space, pasture

³⁴Schlechte Schule.

³⁵Robbins, op. cit., p. 31.

privileges, special fees for singing at weddings and funerals, acting as town clerk, practicing medicine or law, and certain exemptions from civic duties and taxes. The records of Pretzsch in 1555 show a remarkable complexity:

Income of the schoolmaster:

- 10 florins from the marshal;
- 4 loaves of bread and 8 denarii from each landowner;
- 5 bushels of grain;
- 1 piece of land across the Elbe, where the schoolmaster may at his own expense sow two bushels of grain and reap the harvest;
- One third of a piece of meadowland at Bristz, yielding two loads of hay;
- 20 denarii for every corpse for which the bells are rung three times;
- 4 denarii for each christening;
- 1 groschen tuition for each pupil per quarter.³⁶

In 1557 he was provided, in addition, with "free participation in hospitality and beer" at all weddings. In many of the high schools the teachers received a regular wage, averaging about half as much as the local pastor,³⁷ and in some places, as at Wittenberg, there was a close connection maintained between the schoolmaster and the church in return for his steady pay:

On four days of the week the music of the church shall be supplied by the schoolmaster and his three associates, each being responsible for a day; as for example, the schoolmaster on Monday, the first associate on Tuesday, the cantor on Thursday, and the tertius on Friday. On the other day they shall all be in the church.³⁸

³⁶Robbins, op. cit., p. 78.

³⁷Ibid., p. 83.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 91 f.

B. The Saxony School Plan

These circumstances, discovered in almost every parish the Visitation teams inspected, showed clearly the needs of the Protestant people. A plan was already beginning to evolve in Melanchthon's mind: schools should be strictly orthodox from the Lutheran point of view, adequate support must be provided for schools and teachers, all children must be given enough schooling to assure intelligent following of the evangelical beliefs and participation in church worship, but also talented boys must be urged on up the academic ladder in sufficient numbers to assure trained leaders for the future, suitable teachers must be secured, and proper supervision must be established and order secured from the existing chaos. Some sort of uniformity among the Protestant schools appeared to Melanchthon to be essential. To meet this composite need Melanchthon outlined a plan for village school training in his Visitation Articles of 1528, and this plan, essentially unchanged though somewhat revised, became the famous Saxony School Plan on which the schools of Germany were generally modeled for three hundred years. Melanchthon had intended only to make general recommendations, but suddenly he found himself the leading consultant in primary education for northern Europe. He had no actual experience in this field; his practical acquaintance with the problems he sought to solve was limited to his own boyhood experiences in school, the preparatory school he maintained for several years in his own home in Wittenberg, and his experience in teaching boys in

the university who had come to him from the lower schools. Throughout his thinking he was guided by his humanist training, and his assumption that all grammar school training was for the purpose of preparing a boy to do work in classical literature in the university. Upon these theological and practical presuppositions Melanchthon outlined a plan that was to become normative.

"In order that the young may be properly taught," Melanchthon proposed three practical principles. In the first place, teachers shall see to it that the children are taught only Latin. The children are not to be burdened with German, Greek and Hebrew, but are to be taught to master Latin, the only study that can be profitable to them in higher education. Secondly, the children shall not be burdened with many books, and a needless variety of material is to be avoided. Thirdly, it is necessary that the children be divided into classes.³⁹

The three classes that Melanchthon proposed are only very generally parallel to the present grading system employed in primary schools: a class did not represent a year of time but an area of study, from which students might advance only when they had mastered the material of the lower class. The first class was to study the alphabet, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, read the stalwart old grammar of Donatus, and listen daily to a verse or two from Cato "in order to acquire a good vocabulary." The second class proceeded with grammar, and

³⁹Melanthonis, op. cit., Vol. XXVI, pp. 90 ff.

reading in the Fables of Aesop, the Dialogues of Mosellanus, Terence and Plautus. To this typical curriculum of the ancients was added the greatest of contemporary humanist writings, the Colloquies of Erasmus. Students in this class must be able to recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments - in Latin, of course - and study the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistles to Timothy, the First Epistle of John, and the Proverbs of Solomon. The third class followed an even more characteristically medieval curriculum: reading Virgil, the Metamorphoses of Ovid, the Letters of Cicero; writing Latin verse, and studying dialectic and rhetoric.

Melanchthon prescribed even the daily schedule. The first hour of each afternoon was to be devoted to music, by which was meant community singing by the whole school. In the lower class students must show their writing to the master every day, and Cato is to be explained a few verses at a time, with an examination to be conducted by the master on the material several hours later. The main aim of the first class was to store up a large Latin vocabulary, and "the feebler and slower witted child should read Cato and Donatus the second time." The second class had Aesop the first hour after the music class, and the other works after vespers every evening. When the children were about to go home for the night a short verse was to be given them which they must repeat the next morning when school opened. The hour before noon was reserved for grammar, except on the one day a week, Sunday or Wednesday, when the second class received its religious

instruction. The teacher was cautioned against introducing "polemical subjects," and the children should not be taught to scoff at monks. After a knowledge of the Creed and Commandments came the fear of God, an explanation of faith, good works, and other basic doctrines. The 112th Psalm was recommended for memorization, together with the 34th, 128th, 129th, and 127th. The third class reviewed grammar in the morning and read Latin classics in the afternoon, and once a week they were to write compositions in prose or verse. The boys of this class were rigidly confined to Latin conversation, and encouraged in every way possible to master every phase of the language.⁴⁰

In Melanchthon's plan this primary school was the first step in common education, and was to be attended by every child of the community. He had planned his curriculum for one teacher if necessary, but it is quite obvious that three full classes of this schedule would keep one lone schoolmaster very busy indeed. The schedule assumed that school would be kept seven days a week, around the calendar, from early morning till late afternoon. "If such labor is irksome to the schoolmaster, as we often see," said Melanchthon, "then we should dismiss him and get another in his place." The gymnasium was to form the connecting link between the Latin schools and the university, and in them a study of Greek, Hebrew, dialectic, rhetoric and mathematics would prepare boys for the faculty of philosophy. But Melanchthon only laid the

⁴⁰von Baumer, op. cit., pp. 155-58.

groundwork for these secondary schools: Trotzendorf and Sturm followed his lead and spirit in developing the high schools.

Pastors were exhorted to urge their people to send their children to the schools that will be set up under the School Plan, and the need was emphasized for training able and skillful men for the church and government, and teachers encouraged to consider their work of utmost importance, for without the schools both the church would languish and the state decay.

C. Schulordnung

Like the Visitation Articles, which became the basis for a new form of church constitution, the Kirchenordnung, the Saxony School Plan of 1528, was copied and adapted throughout Germany in the Schulordnung. The School Plans were destined to become the charters of a nation-wide educational system. They differ widely in content, but most of them can be traced directly to the Saxony Plan, through which Philip Melancthon assumed incredible influence over the training of schoolchildren in remote districts where his name had never been heard, the specific problems and conditions of which Melancthon himself was quite ignorant. Through them his influence was extended into the future far beyond the length of his own life. Melancthon was directly concerned in the organization of the schools at Nuremberg in 1526, Saxony in 1528, Herzeberg in 1535, and Wittenberg in 1535. Eisleben,⁴¹ Cologne,⁴²

⁴¹1525.

⁴²1543.

Mecklenburg,⁴³ the Palatinate,⁴⁴ and Pfalz-Zweibruck,⁴⁵ sought and received his advice through letters and mutual friends. Through Johannes Bugenhagen, who had been closely associated with Melanchthon, the influence of the Saxony Plan was extended through northern Germany,⁴⁶ and Luther himself exercised a personal hand in the organization of schools in several areas on the basis of Melanchthon's organization.⁴⁷ Within the century the family had grown to several hundred descendants of the Saxony Plan.

The Schulordnung varied widely in content, but they all bore the stamp of Melanchthon's original construction for Saxony. Some contained very little more than a mere statement of the most important general regulations. The Schulordnung of Baden-Durlach was written in 1526, two years before the Saxony Plan was published, and contains only the briefest prescriptions for the duties of the teacher, the course of study with a bare minimum of details, comments concerning the provision for special students, and adds a few words about financial maintenance of the teacher.⁴⁸ In

⁴³1552.

⁴⁴1556.

⁴⁵1557.

⁴⁶Brunswick (1528), Hamburg (1529), Lubeck (1531), Pomerania (1535), Schleswig-Holstein (1537), Brunswick-Wolfenbittel (1543), Hildesheim (1544), and Bugenhagen assisted also at Wittenberg (1533) and Lippe (1538).

⁴⁷The Wittenberg Church Regulations of 1523 were the product of Luther's pen; he was consulted in the School Plans for Leisnig in 1525, Lippe in 1538, and Hersberg in 1538.

⁴⁸Robbins, op. cit., p. 14.

contrast, some of the plans are extremely comprehensive, prescribing hours of study, textbooks, methods, and rules for the conduct of both teachers and pupils.⁴⁹ In all of

⁴⁹For example, the Schulordnung of Briesg, 1581:

Part I.

1. Introductory. General need and purpose of education.
2. Class division and basis of division. Each class is treated separately and work is prescribed for each day of the week. Thus for the fourth class, the following is prescribed for Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays:
 - 6 o'clock: Catechism.
 - 7 o'clock: Reading.
 - 8 o'clock: Presentation of dialogues by boys in pairs. After that follow exercises in Latin forms.
 - 12 o'clock: Writing and correction of exercises (Latin and German)
 - 1 o'clock: Declensions and conjugations.
 - 2 o'clock: Exercises for increasing vocabulary - with a short statement of the method to be followed.
3. Disputations and declamations.
4. Holidays.
5. Examinations and promotions.

Part II.

1. The Rector: duties and jurisdiction.
 2. Duties of professors and associates.
 3. Duties of pupils in general.
 4. Piety.
 5. Duties of pupils to teachers.
 6. Duties of pupils in schools.
 7. Instruction in regard to study, style and memory work (eleven rules).
 8. Dismissal (four rules in regard to leaving school and going home).
 9. Conduct on the street (ten rules).
 10. Conduct and service at home (ten rules).
 11. Duties to strangers (eleven rules).
 12. Duties of pedagogi and assistants (thirteen rules governing the conduct of those who, while students, are private instructors).
 13. Duties of those who live in the halls (twelve rules).
 14. School employees (ten rules).
 15. Funerals (ten rules).
 16. Punishments (ten rules).
 17. Duties of decurions and monitors (ten rules).
 18. Disputation and declamation (ten rules).
 19. The poor and the holders of stipends (ten rules).
 20. Recreation and refreshment (twenty-one rules).
- Conclusion: Admonition to teachers and pupils to keep the rules.

them the teacher is regarded as an important member of the community, and encouraged to regard his work as absolutely essential to the success of the church and the prosperity of the state; the schoolmaster may even be considered superior to the clergy, since they had been his pupils. The Brunswick Ordnung of 1528 points out that the school is to prepare not only leaders, but "efficient, honest, honorable, obedient, kindly, learned, and peaceable" citizens.⁵⁰ At Hanover the School Plan of 1536 insisted that the teacher regard his work as a sacred trust, and avoid the teaching of religious error as though it were blasphemy, for which, the teacher would remember, others were being led to the executioner as civil criminals. The Brandenburg Plan of 1540 holds that the work of teaching is an essential in the maintenance of the Christian religion and of the state, and that the work of teaching is one of the foundations of society, and the Wurttemberg Ordnung of nearly twenty years later points up the importance of schools on the same ground: "since the administration of offices of the sacred ministry, of civil affairs, and of temporal matters, demands well-trained, wise, learned, skillful, god-fearing men."⁵¹ According to the Prussian Bischofswahl of 1568, "schoolmasters are the fathers of all the prophets; for the latter have all been discipuli, and have learned of their teachers and schoolmasters."⁵²

⁵⁰Robbins, op. cit., p. 105.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 106.

⁵²Loc. cit.

3. Melanchthon's Textbooks

The general plan of classical Latin grammar school that Melanchthon outlined for the first time in 1528 remained essentially unchanged in Germany until the nineteenth century. It is almost incredible that throughout the Age of Enlightenment and the development of the mechanical sciences, as well as the beginning of the spirit of theoretical science, the school system could remain based on the ideals of Renaissance humanism. Nevertheless, it was through his textbooks that Melanchthon exercised his greatest influence upon the schools and through the tradition of their popularity even more than through his formal plans of organization that Melanchthon transmitted the ideal of the Latin-speaking humanist dwelling in the ancient world of Horace and Cicero to a new culture interested in the practical life and conditioned by scientific conceptions. Between 1518 and 1544 his Greek Grammar passed through seventeen editions, and in the century after 1545 through twenty-two additional printings. Fifty-one editions of Melanchthon's Latin Grammar were issued between 1525 and 1737, and until 1737 it was used in all the Saxon schools. Elements of his texts in rhetoric and dialectic passed through numerous editions, and several of his textbooks found long standard use in Roman Catholic schools.⁵³

⁵³Richard, op. cit., p. 136.

A. Greek and Latin Grammars

Melanchthon wrote the first draft of the Greek grammar, as he himself says, "while yet scarcely out of boyhood," for pupils of his at Tübingen, and the Latin grammar was first published against his own wish in 1525 at Halle.⁵⁴ Melanchthon was never satisfied with his youthful effort on the Latin grammar, and when he was urged to reissue the book he consented only after making extensive revision. "In the first edition of my grammar there were various omissions," he wrote. "These have been supplied; yet there should not be too many rules, lest their number prove discouraging to the learner."⁵⁵ In his preface to the reprint, written in 1540, Melanchthon indicates how important a place language had come to occupy in his own experience; in the letter language appears to be the primary qualification of a man for the ministry:

How important it is to the church that boys be thoroughly disciplined in the languages! Inasmuch as the purity of the divine cannot be maintained without learning and weighty controversies can only be settled by a determination of the meaning of words, and a wide range of well-chosen expressions is indispensable to a correct construction; therefore what will a teacher in the church be if he does not understand grammar, other than a silent mask or a shameless bawler?⁵⁶

⁵⁴von Raumer, op. cit., p. 158. For the reviews and evaluations of Melanchthon's manuals, I am indebted almost completely to von Raumer.

⁵⁵From a letter to the Frankfort bookseller Agencolph, which appears as a preface to the edition of 1542.

⁵⁶von Raumer, op. cit., p. 159.

Well chosen expressions and correct constructions, even before the death of Martin Luther, have at the hands of Philip Melanchthon become the standards of the evangelical ministry. "Grammar," says Melanchthon in the book itself, "is an exact method of speaking and writing correctly."⁵⁷

Moreover, Melanchthon was making converts to his strict classical views. Camerarius, his closest friend after the collapse of Luther, was given permission to bring out an edition of the grammar to which he had added teaching helps, and Schenk, who taught Latin grammar at Leipzig, sang the praise of the new issue:

This little book has now attained to that perfection that there appears to be nothing deficient in it, nor can there hereafter be anything added to it; and accordingly, it will ever continue to be, as it now is, the sum of all perfection, neither to be altered nor remodeled.⁵⁸

Such an attitude of satisfaction ever indicates a stagnant mind; the great tragedy is that the subject matter which Melanchthon and his colleagues were making the tyrant and touchstone of all education adapted itself perfectly to stagnation. Michael Neander made his own revision of the Latin grammar and commented in the preface:

The Latin Grammar of Philip Melanchthon, delivered with brevity, ease, and clearness, in the compass of a few pages, yet in such a manner as not only to give Melanchthon's language, but his method in the smaller grammar and smaller syntax,

⁵⁷ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 161.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 160.

that first and oldest manual which is more admirably suited to the learner, and which more than any other had been used in all our German schools.⁵⁹

Reander assures his readers on the title page that boys can learn everything that is necessary to the understanding of Latin out of this grammar in a few months.

B. Manual of Logic

Melanchthon's Manual of Logic was first printed in 1520, enlarged and improved in 1527, and given a third edition in 1529. The edition of 1547 is said to have sold three thousand copies in the first six weeks. In the preface Melanchthon betrayed his wholehearted return to the humanist training of his youth by insisting that ordinary common sense be replaced by the more trustworthy judgment of trained, Aristotelian logic. Formal logic had become a vital element in the synthesis that Melanchthon was valiantly trying to establish between evangelical theology and classical culture: it is a help to men of moderate capacities in avoiding dangerous extremism, but "the more gifted are controlled by it, and kept within bounds, and are led to seek after truth and prize truth alone."⁶⁰

Even as there are many men of unbridled passions who hate the restraints of moral law, so there are those who can not abide the rules of art. Dialectics, as hitherto taught by the schoolmen, has, to be sure, fallen into contempt; however, this was because it was not veritable art, but

⁵⁹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 160.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 163.

only the shadow of an art, and entangled men amid endless labyrinthine mazes. But I present here a true, pure, and unsophisticated logic, just as we have received it from Aristotle and some of his judicious commentators.⁶¹

Melanchthon had run the full circle of evangelical thought and had returned to the premise of medieval control: if you can assure the method of thinking, you can assure the end product, and your doctrine is safe. Melanchthon showed in his Manual how logic was to be used to correct statements and determine doctrines of the church, and cautioned that the use of the Aristotelian method by heretical teachers ought not to deter his readers from its right use.

C. Manual of Rhetoric

The Manual of Rhetoric, first issued in 1519 under the title "De Rhetorica Libri tres. -- Wittenberg, Io. Grunenberg," was later revised and enlarged to take its place in the new curriculum following the Manual of Logic. In the edition of 1531 Melanchthon wrote that whereas he had been compelled to speak against corrupt logicians in his earlier text, the case was different with rhetoric since only eminent men like Cicero and Quintillian had written upon this subject, and this text was intended only to be a guide to the understanding of their original writings. True to his reasserting classicism, Melanchthon felt that no improvement upon the ancients had been indicated by the New Theology.

⁶¹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 163.

Eloquence is to be ranked among the highest accomplishments, and involves extensive learning, great talents, long practice, and a keen judgment. Rhetoric is closely allied to logic, and one can not be comprehended without the other.⁶²

D. Manuals of Physics and Ethics

Melanchthon's search for a ground of security in which to plant the Reformation led him almost inevitably to the only area in which he found stability: the unchanging - and long dead - ancients. To Melanchthon belongs the somewhat dubious distinction of becoming the last man to attempt a synthesis between Aristotle and Christianity; his only claim to originality is that the form of Christianity he sought to align with the Greek philosopher was evangelical. His Manuals of Physics and Ethics show the progress of the ill-fated attempt to confine the schools to the Stagirite and the Nazarene. The first edition of the Ethics appeared in 1529, and never became exceptionally popular or influential. In the preface to the Manual on Physics Melanchthon wrote:

The uncertainty which obtains with regard to so much in nature, should not deter us from our search, for it is no less God's will that we trace out his footsteps in the creation ... Let us prepare ourselves for admission to that enduring and eternal Academy, where all the imperfections of our philosophy shall vanish in the immediate presence of the Master-BUILDER, who there shall himself show us his own archetype of the world.⁶³

⁶²von Raumer, op. cit., p. 163.

⁶³Ibid., p. 292.

Knowledge can only be perfected in the future life, Melancthon admitted, but even amid our present darkness, every gleam and every hint of "the harmony of this fair creation forms a step toward the knowledge of God and toward virtue, whereby we ourselves shall also learn to love and maintain order and moderation in all our own acts." The evangelical note creeps into his insistence that the fruits of scientific knowledge should be applied to life: "We have often to speak of the harmony of creation," he pointed out, "so likewise, of the derangement of this harmony, and the evils which God has visited upon man in consequence of the Fall."⁶⁴ Yet the depth of his sympathy with the ancient world is revealed in his firm belief in astrology, a superstition which Luther held up to ridicule to the end of his life. Melancthon was bitterly disappointed in the headstrong refusal of his son-in-law Fabianus to accept a father's advice, but he shrugged away human responsibility with medieval ease: "This is due to the conjunction of Mars and Saturn at his nativity, a fact which I ought to have taken into account when he asked the hand of my daughter." He steadily rejected all invitations both to Denmark and England because an astrologer had predicted in his boyhood that peril would befall him from the North Sea and the Baltic.⁶⁵

⁶⁴von Raumer, op. cit., p. 293.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 165.

E. Addresses

"Truth," said Melanchthon in an oration in 1535, "is a matter of such inexpressible moment that a man from his youth up should cherish a burning hatred toward all sophistry, especially toward that which wears the garb of wisdom."⁶⁶ In this class fall both the ancient Stoics and Epicureans and the contemporary Anabaptists, whose "lawless, undisciplined spirits are very dangerous" because they ignore the rules of logic and consistent thought to reject whatever is disagreeable, "unite things which do not belong together," "employ clear and well-defined terms to express nothing," and "throw around sober realities an air of irony." Melanchthon urged an implacable warfare against those who thus disguise the truth: "The dispositions of men are easily warped, and it needs great wisdom to keep them in the right way." It is to keep men in the right way that Melanchthon designed his School Plan and prepared his textbooks.

Eighteen months later, in 1536, Melanchthon delivered another oration in which he praised culture and education, declaring that ignorance obscures religion, and leads to divisions. Training and education are essential if theological doctrine is to be kept to the path of orthodoxy:

An unenlightened theology is one of the greatest evils, confounding all doctrines, having no clear conception of vital truths, uniting things that

⁶⁶ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 165.

should be divided and tearing asunder things that are joined together. It is contradictory and inconsistent, and there is neither beginning, progress nor result in it. Such teachings are prolific of unnumbered errors and endless disagreements, because in the general confusion one and the same thing is understood thus by one man and quite differently by another. And, since everyone defends his own view, there arises strife and discord. Meanwhile consciences are wracked with doubt, and doubt not resolved ends in disbelief.⁶⁷

This is the typical argument for an authoritative theology, taught and imbued in controlled schools; the next sentence however is a rather remarkable one and relieves the dreariness of the twist evangelical principles had received through the years: "But an enlightened theology should not rest content with grammar and logic; it also has need of physics, moral philosophy and history, for which too a knowledge of the mathematics, for their bearing on chronology, is indispensable."⁶⁸ In an introduction to a treatise on the art of poetry, Melanchthon wrote, "Hand in hand with diligent study we ever find a modest and prayerful spirit," and when a disciple of Schwenkfeld attacked the liberal arts, insisting that the church was not built up by means of reading, hearing and reflecting upon the doctrines of the Bible, but by a certain enthusiasm of the spirit which first overmasters the mind, Melanchthon bitterly exclaimed: "These fanatics invert the order indicated by Paul, namely, 'How shall they believe who have not heard.'"⁶⁹

⁶⁷ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 166.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 166 f.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

Melanchthon's often repeated argument that "a godless spirit goes hand in hand with ignorance," is an impressive one, particularly if it is forgotten that the education that Melanchthon assumes is a Latin dominated one, concerned almost exclusively with a mastery of the ancients. A new world was coming to life, impelled by the liberation of thought and spirit implied in the New Theology of Martin Luther as he discovered it in his lectures on Romans, but Melanchthon was concerned only with teaching the thoughts and language of men who lived and died in the ancient world. The security of the past might provide stability; it also guaranteed sterility. Melanchthon helped draw the reins tight on a world that was struggling with all its being to leap forward. In an oration entitled Encomium eloquentiae Melanchthon made a survey of the studies essential to a complete education, and lashed out at Scotus and the schoolmen who wrote in unintelligible style. He advocated reading the ancient poets, historians and orators, and a diligent practice in prose and poetic style, as the mark of the educated man. The classical studies had dawned again upon the world, he said, in order that theology, which had become corrupt, might again be purified. The deeper meaning of the Scriptures might be imparted by the Spirit, but men must first come to a knowledge of the language, he insisted, for it is in the language that the divine mysteries are embodied. Assuming the method of dialectic to be the only possible method of study, Melanchthon pointed to the terrifying errors into which an inadequate

knowledge of language could lead theologians. A master of arts had once rendered the words Melchisedec rex Salem panem et vinum obtulit thus: "Melchisedec set before him salt, bread and wine; and then proceeded at great length to remark upon the nature of the salt! Such cultural offenses are inexcusable.⁷⁰

4. The Loc1 Communes

Melanchthon's system of thought and his plan for education was saved from complete irrelevance only by his ethical concern. He was a thoroughgoing classical humanist, admiring Plato yet following Aristotle, utilizing pagan elements to enlarge the Christian scheme, deeply influenced in style and content by Cicero and Quintillian. In the areas of classical scholarship Melanchthon had always been a precocious genius, but he had also drunk deeply of the vital spirit of Luther. Other humanists tended to ignore the accepted social standards of behavior as they sank themselves in the pagan past; Melanchthon always remained characteristically Christian in his living and attitudes. Melanchthon was rescued from a completely isolated scholarship by the evangelical concern for the fruits of the Spirit.

During his lectures on the Romans in 1519 he had prepared a guide which he had dictated to the students, entitled

⁷⁰ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 168.

Lucubratiuncula, and in 1520 this Institute on the Epistle to the Romans appeared in print. Melanchthon commented tersely when he saw the printed pamphlet, "Whoever published it, I approve their zeal more than their judgment." After several unsuccessful attempts to suppress the publication, it became known that Luther, who had visited a number of the lectures, had been responsible for the release of the document, and Melanchthon decided to revise and reprint an authorized version of his work. The new work appeared in 1521 at Wittenberg: Loci communes rerum theologicarum, seu Hypotyposes Theologicae. Auctore Phillippo Melanchthone, Wittenbergae, an. MDXXI.⁷¹ The influence of the New Theology of Luther is clear, even through the superior style and rhetorical subtleties the evangelical theology is given at the hand of the young classicist. "Grace is nothing else than the forgiveness or remission of sins," said Melanchthon, and "Faith is nothing else than trust in the divine mercy promised in Christ."

We are justified, therefore, when, having been mortified through the law, we are raised by the word of grace, which is promised in Christ, or the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, and cleave to it in faith, doubting not at all that the righteousness of Christ is our expiation, the resurrection of Christ our resurrection. In short, doubting not at all that our sins are forgiven, and God now favors us and wishes us well. Not our works, therefore, however good they may seem to be, constitute righteousness,

⁷¹Charles Leander Hill, The Loci Communes of Philip Melanchthon (Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1944), p. 52.

but only faith in the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ.⁷²

Yet even at this early date the controlling ethical interest of Melancthon asserted itself. His concern in dealing with the problem of God's law was that the Christian may not only know what the law demands but may also find the power for doing the law; it was Melancthon's desire to strengthen the "feeble mind against the devil, the flesh and the world." He placed everyone under the burden of the law, from which salvation in no way frees men, and insisted upon the holiness of the Christian life. Libertinism of every kind he repudiated. Luther's distinction between the Word of God and the Scriptures nowhere appears in the Loci, and while there is no doctrine of the Bible explained, it is clear that Melancthon quoted from all parts of it with equal reverence.

The 1521 edition of the Loci was an almost unpremeditated work, and though Melancthon had no intention of writing a treatise on dogmatic theology, the Loci Communes was destined to become the first systematic treatment of evangelical doctrines to come from the Protestant Reformation. It was written largely under the domination of Luther's powerful influence, but as the years went by, Melancthon's early training and his own classical mind began to assert themselves, and later editions show a marked deviation from the original insights of Luther: Melancthon was beginning to put the

⁷²Quoted in Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Protestant Thought before Kant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), pp. 73 f.

stamp of humanism not only upon the educational system of the Reformation but upon its theology itself. As time went on and Melanchthon grew more and more independent of Luther, and his own conservatism became more assertive, Melanchthon began to modify some of Luther's extreme views on predestination, the real presence in the Eucharist, and the sharp dualism Luther had created between revelation and reason. Melanchthon was beginning to construct a philosophical system based on the New Theology, and soon opened the way to the scholastic notion that the importance of a doctrine depends more upon its place in the system than upon its practical religious value. Melanchthon's ethical interest kept him from becoming purely scholastic, but in the last revision of the Loci published in 1535 much of the original incisiveness of Luther's theology is obscured and later theologians with less wisdom than Melanchthon possessed were able to turn much of Protestant theology into barren speculation.

Melanchthon's system was the last great attempt to reconcile Aristotle and Christian doctrine, a problem which for Luther had been completely nonexistent since it was totally irrelevant. Luther had no need for attempting a correlation between Christianity and pagan rationalism, but for Melanchthon, interested primarily in the thought of the ancients and confident of the abilities of human reason, it was a burning problem. Melanchthon developed a coordination of reason and revelation as sources of theology which provided the pattern for much of later Protestant thought. Natural

theology, he reasoned, prepared the way for the revealed: reason and revelation cannot be out of harmony. Extremely useful in developing his position was his doctrine of the "natural light," a synthesis of Cicero and St. Paul, which became the basis for his concept of natural law. Underlying the first principles of every science and fundamental to all thought in any area, said Melanchthon, is a certain core of ideas possessed by all men. This common core of knowledge has been directly implanted by God, and thereby divine sanction has been given to the operation of man's intellect, and a certain assurance of accuracy to the results of rational processes. In the ethical sphere the natural moral law is the divine substratum; the divinely revealed Ten Commandments, representing the distillation to final residue of the moral principle in mortal words, is identical: therefore, the revealed law and the natural moral law are to be equated. Natural law received, at the hand of Melanchthon, a rational foundation, and it becomes possible for human life to be ordered according to rational laws. On this basis civil life is free to develop according to rational principles, with guarantee of being righteous and holy because the product of human reason. A Danish theologian, Hemmingsen, used Melanchthon's argument in his publication of 1562, De lege naturae apodictica methodus, which is the first scientific exposition of natural law in the modern age. The medieval concept of natural law had been freed from theology and supernatural authority.

For Melancthon, who placed such high value on human reason, knowledge was the source of piety, and this became his pedagogical program. Picking up Augustine's concept of "creatio continua," Melancthon made the immediate presence and activity of God in creation the very essence of the notion of God. God is not to be likened to a housebuilder who turns the completed edifice over to the hands of its owner, "sondern er bleibet bei seinen creaturen, bei Himmel und Erden, Engelen und Menschen, und macht die Erden jerlick fruchtbar, gibet allen gewachsen, Thieren und Menschen Krafft und Leben."⁷² God is to be known in the orderly working of his universe, and therefore whatever man can know of the world through "natural light" is true also of God; this knowledge is as real and true as revealed knowledge. No area of training should be omitted from an educational program, because, after all, it is all of God and about God. The guarantee for the reality and objectivity of the Christian Knowledge of God garnered through the natural physical world, Melancthon finds in the immanence of the eternal moral law of God, which all men of reason recognize and follow.

However he may exalt the "natural light" of human reason as a practical guide to religious knowledge, Melancthon embraced also revealed truth. His later editions of the Loci contained a formal apologetic for Christianity as a divinely revealed philosophy, and for support he cited in good

⁷³Hill, op. cit., p. 43.

traditional fashion the antiquity of the Christian revelation which reaches back through the Old Testament, the excellence of the Christian doctrine, the continued existence of the church in spite of the hostility of the world, the flesh and the devil, and the abundant attestation to authenticity by miracles. For Melanchthon Scripture contains the true form of Christianity, and though he held a profound respect for Aristotle as a guard against philosophical error and attempted to make a correlation between the philosopher and Christianity for this purpose, Melanchthon derived his basic doctrines always from Scripture. It is at this point that he differed most directly with the Summa of Aquinas; the Loci is a summa of the biblical witness and found both its substance and thought categories there rather than in Aristotle. It is just the sort of synthesis the Christian classicist and humanist would need: a polished, restrained, moderate explanation of how a thinking person can harmonize human learning with the beliefs of faith. Averroes had done it for Mohammedanism, Maimonides for Judaism and Thomas Aquinas for medieval Catholicism. Melanchthon attempted the same for Protestantism, and the effort led him far from the thought patterns and basic assumptions of Martin Luther. The "natural light," possessed by the ancient pagan thinkers as well as the Christian, reveals God to man as all-powerful, all-wise, and omnipresent in the world he has created. The Christian revelation has shown God to be more than this, has revealed God as loving, righteous, and extending grace to man. There is an

obvious relation between them for the classicist Melanchthon: they are both true, and the Christian revelation simply holds a plus sign over the pagan. Reason and revelation are both legitimate sources of knowledge of God.

Melanchthon carefully avoided the deterministic predestination of Luther, and deserted Luther's theory of the Bound Will to support a theory of human freedom. Luther had flatly denied that man could have any part in achieving salvation, either by works or mere desire, and had placed the condition of man's soul and future life completely at God's disposal. Melanchthon's ethical concern led him to place a great deal more weight on the problems of individual guilt for sin and moral responsibility for behavior than Luther, who merely dismissed these considerations since nothing of man's achievement was of importance. Melanchthon, the humanist, was forced to insist that these facts demand human freedom. Given no freedom man is not responsible for his actions. One cannot choose the good nor do the good who does not have the power of free choice. Kant later made the argument into a philosophical tenet: Du sollst den du kannst. Melanchthon could not by nature venture to such an extreme, but he maintained that man was not the tool of God and biological drives, but possessed a rational personality capable of developing ethical and religious freedom and independence. Luther's position was one to which his personal religious experience had driven him; Melanchthon altered it because of his concern for the ethical behavior of individual human beings. The

Peasants' Revolt and the disorder of the churches in 1528 had taught him that men must be placed under the ethical implications of the Gospel.

Having made these deviations from the original line of the New Theology, Melanchthon found himself supporting different views in ecclesiastical matters. During the 1530's, through his attendance at the Marburg Colloquy in which the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was discussed and the pamphlet warfare between Luther and Zwingli, Melanchthon came to feel that Luther had overemphasized the importance of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, and began to lay stress on the spiritual reception of Christ rather than the physical. The two doctrines were perfectly adapted to scholastic exploitation, and in 1552 all the sophistries in the medieval books of dialectics were advanced to support both sides of the argument. In the Formula of Concord the "high" doctrine of the real presence was strongly stated, and the sacramental bread and wine were treated with such reverence in some Lutheran circles that one priest who accidentally spilled the wine was punished by having his fingers cut off.⁷⁴ Melanchthon called such an exaggerated reverence "bread-worship," and Joachim Westphal bitterly attacked Melanchthon's doctrine as "crypto-Calvinism," or Calvinism surreptitiously introduced. The days of Protestant narrowness, scholasticism and intolerance had come.

⁷⁴Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 133.

By 1538 Melanchthon's inherently conservative inclination to walk the middle of all roads led him to affirm the ethical necessity of good works in the life of Christian man. Georg Major began to support Melanchthon's view of good works as evidence of salvation, and in 1552 both were violently attacked by Almsdorf, who went so far as to assert that good works are a hindrance to the Christian life. The battles raged on, flaring at times into bitter intolerance; all of the old scholastic tricks of the medieval schoolmen were recalled to use by both sides; elements of doctrine became important as far as they held consistent positions within a logical system of theology; the purity of orthodoxy became the ultimate issue. The theological disputes found inevitable expression in the curriculum and training of the schools where dialectics again assumed major importance, classicism became suavity of expression, and independence of thought was systematically checked.

Melanchthon's leadership along this path was probably totally subconscious and involuntary, but it was real. He was always conservative, and even while he was supporting the independence and dignity of human reason as correlative of revelation, he was laying the foundation for an association of reason with law and revelation with Gospel, with the inevitable result that in theology reason came to be only an explanation of that already vouchsafed by revelation. His love of the ancient classics led him to emphasize the traditional character of the evangelical faith. "In the true

faith I include the whole doctrine handed down in the books of the prophets and apostles, and comprehended in the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds," he wrote. "We have brought into the church no new dogma, but we renew and illustrate the doctrine of the Catholic church."⁷⁵ The Creeds and the Gospels became the standard expressions of belief, and reason came to be concerned merely with commentary and explanation, for revelation was not to be improved upon. Melancthon has been called a "twilight man,"⁷⁶ for he found his thought-world among the ancients, and forced it upon the Reformation. The sterility of the following two centuries indicates that his synthesis of ancient and contemporary found acceptance.

5. The Educational Result

It was Melancthon's practical ethical interest that led him to be concerned with the schools of the Reformation, and it was through the schools in turn that Melancthon's modification of evangelical theology made itself an integral part of Protestantism. The correspondence between Melancthon and fifty-six cities asking counsel and assistance in founding and conducting Latin schools and gymnasias has been preserved, and it is impossible to know upon how many more cities

⁷⁵Melancthonis, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 222.

⁷⁶Hill, op. cit., p. 49.

he exerted an indirect influence. His correspondence shows that he wrote the constitutions, arranged the curricula, and nominated most of the first instructors for the schools of all of these cities. When a school needed a teacher or rector, the first thought was to consult with Melanchthon. Camerarius, Sturm, Trotzendorf, Meander and Wolf, the most distinguished teachers of Germany, were his pupils, used his textbooks, followed his methods, and it is said that when he died in 1560, there was scarcely a city in Germany that did not have a teacher or a pastor who had been a pupil of Melanchthon.⁷⁶ For many years, even before the death of Luther, Melanchthon was the heart and soul of the university at Wittenberg. In 1533 he wrote the plan of reorganization which made the theological curriculum scriptural and evangelical rather than scholastic and medieval. Under the guidance of his spirit, Wittenberg became the model for other Protestant universities. Königsberg and Jena founded their Protestant universities almost exclusively according to directions from Melanchthon,⁷⁷ and when Tübingen, Leipzig and Heidelberg became Protestant institutions they sought his counsel and adopted his plans. The universities at Frankfurt-on-Oder and Rostock were reorganized to conform to evangelical principles by Melanchthon's pupils. The new university at Griefswald, when it was founded in 1545, took Wittenberg as its model and named Melanchthon "our highly esteemed and

⁷⁶Richard, op. cit., p. 137.

⁷⁷1544 and 1548, respectively.

venerated teacher."⁷⁸ All of these schools, from Latin School to the Theological Faculty of the universities, wherever they followed Melanchthon's ideals and methods bore the mark of Melanchthon's classicism. His plan was to master Latin and Greek in order to study the authors in their original tongues; his purpose was to effect a synthesis of classical antiquity and all the sciences and philosophy with the religious and ethical principles of Christianity. He was one of the greatest teachers and scholars of the sixteenth century, and he accomplished more for the Reformation and strengthening of the educational system of Germany than any other single person. Some of his enemies attacked him for "turning the church itself" into a school. He was indeed the Preceptor Germaniae, a title bestowed upon him by his own century.

Philip Melanchthon, almost by his own efforts alone, rescued the Reformation from the specter of slow starvation that loomed from amidst the confusion and disorder following the Peasants' Revolt. With no leadership in training the evangelical movement would have ebbed away in a generation. With no standards of doctrine and culture its strength was daily passing to the unrestrained radicalism of the sectarians. Even Luther's brilliant heroism was not suited to the salvation of this emergency. It was a situation that demanded patient, careful, restrained building, and Melanchthon was

⁷⁸ Richard, op. cit., p. 140.

the man for the task. The Reformation had given religion to the mind of the people, had made each man his own priest, and had promised to each man the right to walk in immediate relation to God and the truth. If people were to understand their responsibility and rise to it, they must be able to read the sources of their religion, reason clearly, and possess enough culture to live moderately and well. These were the qualities that only education and training can guarantee; they are the fruits of the patient spirit.

The fatal error was to attempt to make the only purpose of the schools the advancement of specific religious doctrines, and to regard Latin classicism as the chief end and duty of the schools. The spirit of the Reformation, which is synonymous with the vital religious spirit of Martin Luther, was almost lost in a series of battles about dogmatic formulas. Scholasticism was again revived. The emergencies of the first generation successfully passed, the Reformation sank back into abstraction, from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Education became largely a method of loading the mind with theological formulas, and scientific studies were continued for their practical rather than for their scientific values. Melancthon's celebrated Saxony School Plan itself, though it was the first effort in the campaign that provided schools for all Germany, provided that the teacher be an object of reverence more than a helper of the pupils, that purity of religious doctrine be the predominant aim of all instruction

with Latin the universal taskmaster, and that the memory be crowded with the formulas of the church and sentences prepared by the teacher. The schools that Melanchthon hoped to make a preparation for pure life and instruction in love for God and man, because of his lack of the original insight and courage necessary to break away from his classical humanist background became to children a place of Latin gloom, to preparatory school boys an arena of minute and barren technicalities, to university men a training ground for religious hair-splitting. The new intellectual world promised by the Reformation had failed to come.

CHAPTER XI

RETURN TO SCHOLASTICISM

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CHAPTER XI

RETURN TO SCHOLASTICISM

In proposing the New Theology, Martin Luther had announced principles that would set free the mind of man from centuries of medieval bondage to church, superstition and ignorance. He had proposed to take religious doctrine from the stiff safekeeping of the church and place it freely in the hands of the people. He had suggested that man's relationship to God was direct and unmediated. It is true that Luther always distrusted the achievements of human reason, yet he recommended a synthesis of home, school and church into a wholesome life of righteousness. It was an ideal that assumed a basis of widespread freedom and popular intelligence. If ever he should leave the ministry, he said, he would want to be a schoolteacher.

The Reformation was an attitude that placed the future in the hands of the schools, and all of its leaders were educated men who had spent most of their own lives in the atmosphere of the schoolroom. Melancthon wrote to Sturm in Strassburg, "What is more profitable, or, I may add, more praiseworthy, than to fill the hearts of the youth with the saving knowledge of God, of the nature of things, and with

good morals?"¹ Bugenhagen, who carried Melancthon's ideals into Northern Germany, said: "Two classes of men, teachers and magistrates, are the most eminent on earth, not on account of their own persons, for they are only poor mortals like others, but on account of their office, which God has given them in his stead."²

Yet within the years marked by the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the basic intellectual direction of the Reformation was changed, not only once, but twice. When men of lesser wisdom and cultural restraint than the Reformers seized upon the doctrines of the New Theology and carried them to their logical ultimate, radicalism and anarchy almost destroyed the Reformation itself. The sudden release from authoritarianism also set free tensions drawn taut by centuries of oppression, and the impact that resulted was shattering. The Peasants' Revolt was the logical and almost inevitable result of the double release from cultural and religious authority furnished by Renaissance and Reformation. Violent anti-intellectualism and the chaos uncovered by the Visitations convinced the leaders of the evangelical movement that the mind of the common people must be equipped for utilizing the new forces placed in individual men's hands: schools, universal, compulsory, and religious, were the answer. This was the first change, and the second soon

¹Charles Leonidas Robbins, Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Columbia University, 1912), p. 105.

²Loc. cit.

followed. Growing doctrinal differences and persisting radical sectarianism convinced the Reformers that the immediate situation demanded control and a guarantee of orthodoxy rather than a free training for independence of thought. Schools were also the answer to this problem. It was no longer possible to keep the people in total ignorance; all that was necessary was to keep the people in line, and that aim the schools could accomplish more thoroughly than any other agency. By 1550 the hard white light of Protestant scholasticism had replaced the vivid, moving color of the aurora that had broken with the Reformation into the dark night of the Middle Ages. Within twenty-five years of the shock of the Peasants' Revolt, the Reformation standard of the cross and open Bible had been exchanged for a coat of arms with a rampant Latin lion holding the keen sword of orthodoxy to the neck of a prostrate Christian reading the Augsburg Confession.

With the collapse of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon became the accepted leader of the Reformation, and his attitudes, cultural, classical, humanistic, rational and uninspired, became normative for all Protestantism. Melancthon struggled valiantly to save the Reformation from complete collapse, and left it stamped indelibly with his personality. Through him the Reformation preserved its life, and lost its power of creation.

1. The University of Wittenberg

The University of Wittenberg illustrated the process. For twenty-five years Melanchthon was its soul and fame; for a century and a half it bore the impress of his influence. Throughout his mature life he devoted himself consistently to the cause of classicism at the university. In 1531 he announced that he would give a course of lectures on Homer: "This noblest of poets is compelled now to wander about imploring men to listen to him."³ At the completion of a course on the second Olynthiac of Demosthenes in 1533, he mournfully commented: "I perceive that this generation has no ears for such authors. For there remain to me but a few hearers, and these have not forsaken me lest I be wholly discouraged; for this courtesy I thank them." However, he was determined to "discharge the duties" of his office, and announced a new course in the writings of Demosthenes which shall commence on the next day.⁴ Three years later the same circumstance existed at the conclusion of a course on Ptolemy's treatise, De apotelesmatibus et judiciis astrorum, and prompted strikingly similar words: "It gives me pain," said Melanchthon, "to perceive that some of my hearers have already taken a dislike to so excellent an author."⁵ But Melanchthon

³Karl von Haumer, Geschichte der Pädagogik (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1877), Vol. I, p. 289.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Ibid., p. 288.

continued to devote himself to the cause of the classics: together with religion the ancient classics were the sole aim and purpose of education, and through his influence the classics remained the core of the university curriculum. Geography and history were entirely omitted from the plan of study and mathematics played but a subordinate role, while natural science and natural history were ignored entirely. The professor of mathematics and astronomy at Wittenberg adopted the Copernican theory, but in spite of his ability, "because of the general distaste for mathematical pursuits, he had few hearers."⁶ Even the simplest arithmetic was too difficult for students immersed in Latin grammar and ancient literature. A master at Wittenberg issued an invitation to the university students to his course in mathematics, urging students to undertake the study, for the first principles were easy, and though the principles of multiplication and division require diligence, the attentive could master even these difficulties!

According to the reorganized curriculum of the university largely planned by Melancthon in 1545, the so-called philosophical faculty of the university was to have ten members, and with the exception of the mathematical lectures on the Sphere of John de Sacro Busto, the epistles of St. Paul

⁶Erasmus Reinhold, 1511-1552, chiefly distinguished for his work Tabulae prutenicae coelestium motuum.

were the most recent works studied at Wittenberg.⁷ In the university undergraduate classes, declamations and disputations were held on alternate Saturdays. The Theological Faculty consisted of four professors, who offered a curriculum of Old and New Testament books, chiefly Psalms, Genesis, Isaiah, the Gospel of St. John, and the Epistle to the Romans, and a course in dogmatics in which some comment was made upon the Nicene Creed and Augustine's De spiritu et litera. It was not until 1561 that exegesis, dogmatics and catechetics were added to the schedule. Seven jurists offered courses on Roman and canon law, and one physician lectured on the ninth book of Raisis ad Almansorem, one doctor read Hippocratica et Galenica, and a third medic lectured on Galen and Avicenna. The medical students had no apparatus, no collections of specimens, no anatomical museums, botanical gardens, and it was not until 1569 that the medical faculty was authorized to hold dissections. The bodies of executed criminals were eventually turned over to the university, and an inscription was placed over the door of the new anatomical theater at Wittenberg:

⁷The first professor was to lecture on logic and rhetoric, the second on physics and the second book of Pliny's natural history; the third taught arithmetic and the Sphere; the fourth was to explain Euclid, the Theoriae Planestrarum of Barbach and Ptolemy's Almagest; the fifth and sixth professors were to expound the Latin poets and Cicero; the seventh, who was the "Pedagogus," explained to the younger class Latin grammar, Terence and some of Plautus; the eighth, who was designated the "Physicus," read Aristotle's Physica and Dioscorides; the ninth gave instruction in Hebrew; and the tenth reviewed Greek grammar, read lectures on Greek classics, and the epistles of Paul, occasionally on ethics.

Here wicked men are found at last in useful ways,
And here death shows us how to lengthen out our days.⁸

Lectures on the classics and a mastery of Latin were the accepted method of study, whether the student be specializing in theology or medicine. It was not until 1572 that a chair of French was established at Wittenberg, and William Rabot was brought from Dauphiny to be the first professor of a contemporary language at the university. The library fund at the university yielded a hundred gulden annually; the sixty-three dollars was to be used "for the profit of the university and chiefly of the poorer students therein, the library may be adorned and enriched with books in all the faculties and in every art as well as in the Hebrew and Greek tongues."⁹

2. The Universities after 1550

Like the university at Wittenberg, all the schools of Germany bore the mark of Melancthon's hand during the second half of the sixteenth century. Friedrich Paulsen, eminent

⁸Qui vivi noucuere mali, post funera prosunt
Et petit ex ipse comoda morte salus.

⁹von Paumer, *op. cit.*, p. 290. In a footnote von Paumer continued: "The largest salaries then received by any of the professors at Wittenberg amounted to only two hundred gulden. The third medical professor had but eighty gulden. The annual expenditure of the entire university did not exceed 3,795 gulden ... But we should remember that a cord of wood could then be bought for six groschen, and other things in proportion. For board, lodging and government, the student paid annually the sum of thirty gulden."

German historian of German education, calls the period from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth the period of the territorial confessional universities.¹⁰ The universities lost the universal and international character they had possessed at the end of the Middle Ages, when men from all the countries of Europe flocked to Paris, Oxford, Prague, Vienna and Heidelberg. The schism in the church brought about by the Reformation was an important element in this development. Germany gave its allegiance section by section, and sometimes village by village, to one or the other of the religious factions, and each territory became determined to train its civil and ecclesiastical officials at a university of its own. Also, and perhaps more important for the history of education, each territorial unit maintained strict supervision over the teaching of its own university: instruction must be in harmony with the confessional standards of its own established church, and civil officials were to be trained without travelling to foreign universities where radical and dangerous notions might be taught. Thus, for example, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the people of Brandenburg, which had remained a Catholic territory, were repeatedly forbidden to attend the Saxon university at Wittenberg, the home of Lutheran orthodoxy.¹¹

¹⁰Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities and University Study (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 33.

¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

To set up a university a great deal of money was not needed, and new universities sprang up everywhere. Every large city boasted its own institution of higher learning, and no territorial government was complete without its university.¹² No great expenditure of money was involved in

¹²Paulsen (op. cit.) in a table (p. 443) and in comments (pp. 33 ff.) divides the history of the German universities into four periods, of which the first three are of interest here. The third period is that with which we are presently concerned:

First Period:

Prague (Austrian), 1348.
 Vienna (Austrian), 1365.
 Heidelberg, 1385 - first real German university.
 Erfurt, 1392-1816.
 Leipzig, 1409.
 Rostock, 1419.

Second Period:

Greifswald, 1456.
 Freiburg, 1457.
 Basel (Swiss), 1460.
 Ingolstadt, 1472-1802.
 Treves, 1473-1798.
 Mentz, 1477-1798.
 Tübingen, 1477.
 Wittenberg, 1502-1817.
 Frankfort-on-Oder, 1506-1811.

Third Period:

Marburg, 1527. First Protestant foundation.
 Königsburg, 1544. For the secular duchy formed out of the territory of the Teutonic Order - Protestant.
 Billingen, 1549-1803. Established by the Bishop of Augsburg - Catholic.
 Jena, 1558. Established for that portion of the old electorate of Saxony which remained in the possession of the Ernestinian Line after the Albertians had obtained Wittenberg with the electoral dignity. And notwithstanding the smallness of the territory in which it is situated, and the scarcity of means, this seat of the Muses on the Saale has to this day maintained a very honorable place among the German universities - Protestant.
 Braunsberg, 1808. Reorganized 1818 - Protestant.
 Helmstadt, 1576-1809. Established with considerable equipment for the duchy of Brunswick, one of the

the establishment of a new university, for the curriculum remained unchanged from the traditional classical core set

most important German Protestant institutions of the seventeenth century. The theologian Calixtus and H. Nonring, founder of the history of German law, were especially prominent on its faculty - Protestant.

Olmutz (Austrian), 1581-1655. Catholic.

Wurzburg, 1582. Established with considerable equipment by the Prince-Bishop Julius - Catholic.

Gratz (Austrian), 1585 - Catholic.

Giessen, 1607. Of minor importance; detached from Marburg, which had gone over to Calvinism, as a Lutheran institution for Hesse-Darmstadt - Protestant.

Faderborn, 1615-1818. Episcopal foundation, Hapsburg - Catholic.

Strassburg, 1621. Newly founded 1872, one of the more important universities of the seventeenth century; grew out of the gymnasium of Strassburg, which previous to this time had been equipped with lecture-ships - Protestant.

Hinteln, 1621-1809. Always a minor school - Protestant.

Altdorf, 1622-1807. One of the more important schools of seventeenth century; grew out of the gymnasium of Eurnberg which was removed to the free city of Altdorf in 1622 - Protestant.

Salzburg (Austrian), 1623-1810. Episcopal foundation - Catholic.

Osnabruck, 1630-1633. Episcopal - Catholic.

Bamberg, 1648-1803. Episcopal - Catholic.

Duisberg, 1655-1818. Minor - Reformed (Protestant).

Kiel, 1655. Founded for duchies of Schleswig-Holstein - Protestant.

Innsbruck (Austrian), 1672. Hapsburg - Catholic.

Halle, Breslau, Göttingen, Erlangen, Munster, Berlin, Bonn, Munich, Zurich, Berne, Czerbowitz and Frieberg, all continuing in existence to the present, belong to the fourth period and were founded between 1694 and 1809. Many of the earlier universities were discontinued during the reconstruction of the German states beginning early in the nineteenth century, and the episcopal foundations also went under with the ecclesiastical states which controlled them. The Eberian University of Wurzburg is the only one of these that remains today. Remnants of some of the others continue to exist as theological seminaries, and the Austrian universities of Graz, Innsbruck and Breslau also continue.

up by Melanchthon, and the method of lecturing, also unchanged, demanded but few books and no libraries or laboratories for research. An old monastery would furnish the buildings necessary, a few thousand gulden would suffice to pay the salaries of the ten or fifteen professors. Some local ministers and physicians would undertake the theological and medical lectures, a license from the otherwise unoccupied emperor to grant degrees was easily obtained, and a new university was ready to grace the educational scene in Germany.¹³ The old patterns of organization remained standard, for the four faculties, the office of rector and deans, the lectures and disputations, examinations and degrees, weathered all the storms of time, and the faculty of philosophy continued to provide a preparatory training of a general character, leading up to the specialized studies in theology, law and medicine.¹⁴

Under the impact of the Protestant insistence that the clergyman is a preacher and teacher of doctrine rather than an administrator of cult and ritual, the theological faculties of the German universities began to grow in size and importance during this period. The completion of a theological course was becoming generally recognized as a necessary requirement for the evangelical ministry, for Protestants had come to regard purity of doctrine a matter of importance

¹³Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities, Their Character and Historical Development (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1895), pp. 49 f.

¹⁴Friedrich Paulsen, German Education Past and Present (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), pp. 60 f.

to be assured by doctrinal formulas and systematic philosophy such as only could be learned at the schools. The Catholic church was strongly influenced by the movement toward theological education among the Protestants, and the Roman theological seminaries date from the time of the counter-reformation. The faculty of law also began to grow, for the ancient imperial law of the Romans was now becoming recognized as the foundation of the modern state. A new class of officials was coming into existence, whose chief qualification for a place in the ruler's court was its knowledge of law. It was the faculty of medicine that was generally slighted, and for many years medical studies were ignored at most of the new universities; their purpose was rather to secure leaders whose thinking could be implicitly trusted for the administration of both church and state.

The studies in the faculty of philosophy, or undergraduate school, continued to be the most important. Its curriculum was a continuation of the studies of grammar school and gymnasium, and offered a preparation for men who advanced later to theology and law. The faculty of philosophy also remained the least changed by the momentous events of the sixteenth century. Except for the addition of the ancient classics to the study of Aristotle, which had been almost exclusive in the Middle Ages, the curriculum remained almost unaltered. In the medieval universities every professor lectured on all the subjects, and his subject matter for each quarter was traditionally determined by lot; in the

newer universities "chairs" were established for specific subjects, and a lecturer was given the opportunity to become a specialist in a given field; but as a whole the method of instruction was not different from that of the Middle Ages. Students progressed from Greek and Latin grammar, dialectics and poetry, to rhetoric, physics and mathematics, and the bachelor's examination. The candidate for the master's degree continued the process with Aristotle's Physics and Ethics and a smattering of mathematics, and the master's examination. Professors continued to read through the texts in class, making comments and explanations while students busily copied down into their books the pearls of wisdom that issued from the instructor. Originality and curiosity were not encouraged, and except for a general emphasis upon the ancient writings rather than an almost exclusive devotion to Aristotle, the curriculum was much like that of the fourteenth century. In the theological faculty a different doctrine was taught, but with the same attention to accuracy of formula that marked the system against which Martin Luther had rebelled fifty years before. In a world that might have been coming alive, the universities put the final cap of dogmatism on the spirit of aridity that had been cultivated in a man since he began grammar school in his home town. Purity of doctrine and security of political thought had been achieved, but if a man were to think for himself he needed to stay away from the schools. And thus it came to pass that the original spirits of the "theological-

confessional" period were uneducated men. Painting, sculpture, poetry and music betrayed the reaction felt also in religion against men who by violence and bloodshed almost brought the new world to birth three hundred years before its time.

3. The Primary Schools

With the growing emphasis on trained leadership for civil and church offices, it became clear that if men were to be urged to the higher levels of university education, the simple beginnings of reading and writing must be made in childhood on the local level. In the early years Luther had urged universal education in the local communities and parishes for both boys and girls,¹⁵ but in 1530, in the Sermon on Keeping Children in School, he spoke only of boys. Nevertheless, it was the general character of the evangelical faith that brought the primary schools of Germany into widespread existence, and, characteristic of the general historical pattern, changed their method and aim from general instruction to doctrinaire sectarianism. The original insight had been to make the Scriptures, as the source of all truth and all right doctrine, available to everyone in Protestant Germany. It was to this end that the Scriptures were put into the German tongue. But it soon became obvious that a correct

¹⁵Address to the Christian Nobility, 1520, almost incidentally; and Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen, 1524.

understanding of the Bible could not be achieved without guidance, and to avoid strange doctrines and point out the right way, Luther prepared the two catechisms. The shortened form was intended for use by the laymen, by teachers in the schools, and was to be the summa doctrinae according to which the Bible was to be read and interpreted. Instruction in reading and catechism soon became the total curriculum of the Protestant primary schools. The Saxony School Plan of 1528 expressly excluded instruction in the German language and insisted that Latin be the medium of all teaching. Boys began from the very first to read and write in Latin, the language of the revered ancients whose literature they would hear explained in the universities. Donatus and Cato remained from the medieval years, the handbooks of the beginners. As a general plan the second form studied Latin grammar and began to read the classics, and the third graders began the real humanistic curriculum. The boys who were not able to continue in school went out into practical life happy in the possession of the catechism and a smattering of schoolboy Latin, and the church could feel assured that these boys did not possess an awakened curiosity which might lead them to independent study of the Scripture and dangerous doctrinal conclusions of their own.

During the second half of the sixteenth century the "German" or "national" schools, in which the vernacular language was taught, grew very slowly, and as an institution independent of the grammar schools. The school regulations

issued by Duke Christopher of Wurtemberg in 1559 appear to be the first which devote special attention to German schools in a separate paragraph, the contents of which were adopted by the Electorate of Saxony in 1580.¹⁶ Even in 1580 Saxony considered the German school a makeshift for villages and towns which could not support a regular Latin grammar school; where there was a Latin school the German school was regarded as a mere supplement for Latin training; and in both cases the German school was kept under the careful supervision of the local church. The instruction, as a rule, was to be given by the sacristan or parish clerk, the pastor was to be the school inspector, and the teacher was required to pass an examination before the superintendent of the church district in respect to his faith. The curriculum was to be composed of reading, writing, catechism and singing. It was not until the seventeenth century that German church and civil authorities began to recognize the German school as an important part of German life. However, during the sixteenth century independent German reading and writing schools were regarded as "hedge schools" and persecuted by the authorities.

¹⁶Paulsen, German Education, p. 77.

4. The Secondary Schools

The secondary schools, however, provided the most fertile field for the work of the Protestant scholastics. The boys who were trained here would either go on to the universities to become members of the select circle of important territorial leaders, or would return to their homes to become local officials. Upon these boys in their 'teens lasting impressions could be made and permanent orthodoxy among the future leaders of Germany assured. It is also in this area that the results of Latin classicism are most distressingly visible.

Furthermore, a new middle class was rising in Germany which, with increasing wealth and rising social ambition, was seeking a basic education for its sons. The solid German burgher, enjoying a measure of comfort and financial security, began to take it for granted that his son would learn to read Latin if he were to continue in his father's business, and if he were to decide to raise his status by entering a profession, secondary school training would be essential. Sons of the nobility also began to find secondary school training a necessity, for Latin was the universal diplomatic tongue of Europe, and the Italian Renaissance had made it imperative that nobility possess a "well-rounded" background which would enable him to quote the ancients and compose Latin verse upon occasion. In the secondary school the evangelical movement

was presented with its greatest opportunity for influencing the nation as a whole.

Wherever possible, the educational reformers utilized the existing city-schools, reorganizing them, providing for supervision, and enlarging the curriculum to provide boys with a thorough Latin and classical preparation for study with the philosophical faculty of the universities. The city-schools¹⁷ were the direct descendants of the medieval schools maintained by the cathedral in the larger towns, but with the Reformation the local government took control, appointing and paying teachers, inspecting the school and issuing school regulations with the assistance of the clergy. By midsixteenth century no prosperous town could be without a city-school, of secondary grade. The state-schools,¹⁸ on the other hand, were distinctly a product of the Reformation, founded by the territorial sovereign¹⁹ and administered and superintended by his government for the purpose of preserving the orthodoxy of the church he had established and providing civil leadership for his government. Maurice of Saxony innovated the movement in 1543 when he founded schools at Pforta, Meissen and Grimma, endowing them with the buildings and other property of secularized convents. They were to

¹⁷Stadt-Schulen.

¹⁸Staadts-Schulen.

¹⁹The schools were variously titled: Fursten-Schulen for the prince who founded them; Landes-Schulen, or territorial schools; Kloster-Schulen, or convent schools, when utilizing old monastery buildings.

receive two hundred and fifty boys each, one hundred of whom were to be appointed by the cities of Saxony, seventy-six by the nobility, and fifty-four by Maurice himself. Students, selected according to their ability or lack of personal means, must already have mastered the rudiments of Latin, be between twelve and twenty years of age, and be prepared to spend five or six years in preparation for entrance to university. Arrangements were made with Leipzig and Wittenberg to continue the education of these graduates at public expense, and the students were expected to serve the state either in civil or ecclesiastical positions after graduation from the University. Wurtemberg followed the plan of Saxony in 1559, Ansbach in 1582, and Coburg in 1605; in the north the state schools of Pomerania and Brandenburg were founded at Stettin in 1543, and Joachimsthal in 1607.²⁰

Valentine Trotzendorf, Michael Neander and John Sturm, most distinguished of sixteenth century secondary school teachers and all pupils of Philip Melancthon, tell in their teaching careers the story of the fate that befell Protestant education in Germany.

A. Valentine Trotzendorf

Valentine Friedland Trotzendorf was born in 1480, the son of a farmer in the village of Trotzendorf near Gerlitz named Bernard Friedland. Monks induced the father to send

²⁰Paulsen, German Education, pp. 65 ff.

his son to school in Gorlitz in 1506, but before the year ended the father withdrew the boy in order to have help at his work in the fields. The village pastor was persuaded to give the lad instruction in reading and writing, and after two years he returned to the Gorlitz school. When his father died in 1513 of the plague, Valentine sold his inheritance and began study at Leipzig under Peter Mosellanus and the Greek scholar Richard Crocus. Three years later he returned to the Gorlitz school as a teacher with such a mastery of Greek that not only fellow teachers but the rector took lessons from him. In 1518 Luther's appearance challenged him to leave Gorlitz and become a student at Wittenberg, where he learned Hebrew and the New Theology and became a fast friend and admirer of Melancthon. He was invited by a friend to become a teacher in the new school at Goldberg in 1523, and in the next year Trotzendorf himself became the rector, involving himself and the school in carrying through the evangelical Reformation in Goldberg and standing strongly against the radicalism of Schwenkfeld and his followers. For two years he lectured at the University of Leiznitz, and for nearly three at Wittenberg, but his heart was with younger men, and when he was invited back to Goldberg to reorganize the secondary school, which had deteriorated during his absence, he accepted and spent the last twenty-five years of his life as the famous and distinguished schoolmaster of Goldberg. Students poured in upon him from Silesia, Austria, Carinthia, Hungary and Poland, and Trotzendorf developed a plan of

training that was copied widely throughout the neighboring cities.²¹

Trotzendorf's school at Goldberg, with its use of older boys in teaching and school government, the spirit of friendliness between teachers and pupils, together with the familiar Melanchthonian concentration on Latin and the classics, was in many ways one of the best plans of education to emerge from this period. Trotzendorf was an older man than either Meander or Sturm, and perhaps the fact that he had come to the Reformation in 1518 as an experienced teacher led him to a more free and independent adaptation of the New Theology to educational principles than was made by others who came more completely under the influence of Melanchthon.

The government of the school at Goldberg was an interesting combination of democracy and dictatorship. Trotzendorf divided the school into six classes, and each class into appropriate tribes, and associated students from the classes with himself in the administration of the school. However, the whole organization was a strictly hierarchical one. Each class had its Oeconomi, students whose responsibility it was to see that everyone rose in the morning and retired at night at the set times, and that rooms, closets, clothing, and personal equipment be kept in good order. The Epheori were trusted with the duty of preserving order at table. Also, each tribe had its gusestor, chosen weekly by the tribe, all of

²¹von Baumer, op. cit., pp. 172 f.

which were subject to the supreme Quaestor of the class, who was chosen monthly. The quaestors were responsible for punctual attendance at classes, were required to report misdo-means and laziness, and proposed the subjects for the Latin debates held in the half-hour period after meals. From these representatives chosen by the students, Trotzendorf chose a senate which was a sort of student supreme court for trying misbehaving students. Trotzendorf himself presided at the trials, at which the student was required to make a defense in Latin, and often enough the case was judged upon the quality of the address rather than the degree of guilt. Over all this student government Trotzendorf remained perpetual and absolute dictator. There was no court of appeals beyond him, and no student appointment could be made without his approval, no punishment administered without his complete satisfaction. It is quite possible that his system of student assistance enabled him to maintain a more complete control of the students than he could have managed alone.

Strict obedience to superiors was the chief rule of the school at Goldberg, and one of the primary aims of the educational system. "These men will rule conformably to the laws," said Trotzendorf, "who, when boys, learn to obey the laws."²² Accordingly, he laid down a clear set of principles which each boy was expected to accept and honor:

²² von Raumer, op. cit., p. 174.

1. Tros Tyrinusque mihi nullo discrimine agatur. Here, where scholars are assembled from all countries, all must be governed equally and alike.

2. Dactus tribulus serva legem was a Lacedaemonian proverb. And here, too, must those favored by fortune as well as the base-born, so long as they are scholars, conform to the laws. The pupil is no longer the nobleman.

3. According to the degree of their demerit, the scholars are to be punished with the rod, the lyre,²³ or imprisonment. Those who, either on account of noble descent or years shrink from the disgrace of these punishments, must either do right and thus not come under sentence, or leave our school and seek freedom to do as they please elsewhere. Fines are never to be imposed in any case since they affect parents rather than children.

4. Every newcomer, before being enrolled among the scholars, must first promise to obey the law of the school.

5. The members of our school must be members likewise of our faith and our church.²⁴

In this benevolent despotism of education Trotzendorf required that his students possess a clear knowledge of Protestant doctrine, practice of regular personal devotions, church attendance, confession, participation in communion, and absolutely forbade swearing, cursing, foul language, and the practice of magic. Of course, all was not always serene, and it is a sign of normalcy that even Trotzendorf's dictatorship did not guarantee student perfection. In 1549, in fact, Earl Fromnitz, Jonas Talkwitz, and Wolfgang Keppel were spending a happy

²³Lyra, or fidicula: made of wood in the shape of a violin, and furnished with strings. Triflers were disgraced by being made to stand with this about their neck and their hands passed through it and fastened.

²⁴von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 174 f.

evening in the Goldberg wine cellar when a drunken watchman staggered in and seizing one of their steins drank down an order of beer. Promnitz lost his temper and threw the empty glass, wounding the watchman in the head. When the injured man brought legal action, the three students were imprisoned, and their case carried to Frederick III, Duke of Leignitz, who condemned all three to death without hearing their defense. Promnitz was pardoned through the intercession of the Bishop of Breslau, his cousin, but the other two, who had committed no crime at all, were beheaded upon the Monday following the feast of the Three Martyr Kings.²⁵ There is no record that Trotzendorf made any effort in defense of his three wayward students.

In the school regulations he prepared in 1548, Trotzendorf records the aim of his school "to prepare boys to enter upon the study of the higher faculties, as theology, medicine, philosophy and jurisprudence." To accomplish this aim,

In the first place, grammar, inasmuch as it is the mother and nurse of all arts, must be pursued with the most thoroughgoing diligence. Therewith should be combined useful readings from good authors, such as Terence or Plautus, and Cicero, the epistles and offices chiefly. Thus boys being guided into the Latin tongue both by rule and by example, will learn to speak Latin and to write it with equal propriety. Next should come reading from the poets, as Virgil, and some books of Ovid, so that the boys may comprehend meter, and learn to construct verses.²⁶

²⁵ von Raumer, op. cit., p. 179.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 175.

Trotzendorf required that every week each student should write a prose letter in Latin, and some Latin verse. In these compositions students were warned against using any phrase before they had determined in what author it occurred, and specifically instructed never to use German, but "with teachers, fellow students or other learned persons, speak in Latin alone." It is said that so little German was spoken in Trotzendorf's school that the boys came gradually to regard their mother tongue as a foreign language, and of Trotzendorf himself:

He had so thoroughly infused the Roman tongue into all the neighborhood that it was deemed a disgrace to utter even a word of German; and, could you have heard the Latin accents that poured from the tongues of plough-boys and dairy-maids, you would have thought, "surely Goldberg is within the borders of Latium."²⁷

In addition to the basic mastery of Latin, pupils learned some Greek, logic, introductory rhetoric and natural philosophy, some music and simple arithmetic, and received some religious instruction from Trotzendorf himself. Games and exercise were not part of the curriculum, and the laws of the school prohibited bathing in cold water in the summer time and throwing snowballs in the winter.

Melanchthon said that Trotzendorf was "born to the government of a school as truly as the elder Scipio Africanus to the command of an army," and Trotzendorf seems to have secured the admiration and respect of all his students. His

²⁷ von Haumer, op. cit., p. 176.

older pupils became instructors in the beginning classes, and he himself once said, "If I could muster all my scholars together, I could present the emperor with quite a respectable army to fight the Turks." The military metaphors are apt even if they are accidental. The whole school was run with military precision and administered with military discipline. His boys mastered Latin, and little else.

The last years of his teaching career were difficult ones. In 1552 a disastrous famine seized the Goldberg area, and in the next year plague followed, but Trotzendorf continued teaching the few students that remained in the upper gallery of the church, insisting that the air was more pure at that elevation. In 1554 most of Goldberg, including the school, was burned, and Trotzendorf moved classes to Leignitz, where, on the twentieth of April, 1556, while lecturing on the 23rd Psalm, he was stricken with apoplexy. "My friends," he said, "I am now called away to another school," and died at his home five days later.²⁸

B. Michael Neander

Though the preoccupation with Latin at Goldberg was typical of Protestant secondary education, through student

²⁸ von Haumer, op. cit., pp. 173-79. von Haumer records in a footnote the few writings by Trotzendorf that have survived, and in each case they were issued after his death by his pupils:

1. Catachesis scholae Goltpergensis scripta a Valentine. Trocedorfio cum praefatione Phil. Melaneth. Vitebergae, 1561.
2. Precesiones V. Trocedorfii recitatae in schola Goltbergensi. Lipsiae, 1581.
3. Rosarium scholae Trocedorfii. Viteb., 1568.
4. Methodi doctrinae catarchicae. Gorliz, 1570.

government and participation Trotzendorf was able to create one of the best schools in the evangelical system. Michael Neander, also pupil of Melanchthon, was almost a rebel, and in his direction of the cloister school at Ilfeld in the Hartz gave a glimpse of what education might have been even under the restrictions of Latin classicism and Melanchthonian evangelicism. Neander even asked himself why he should teach Latin and Greek at all, an audacious question in a period when Ciceronian Latin had become a fetish and originality of thought was not highly prized. In addition to the universally standard grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, Neander proposed to teach history, geography, science and music. For most of these studies he had to make both the courses and textbooks for himself, and so he wrote a handbook of natural philosophy, a brief universal history he titled Compendium Chronicorum, and a geography he called Orbis Terrae Divisio.²⁹ To their sixteenth year, boys studied Latin and Greek at Ilfeld,

²⁹ von Haumer (op. cit., p. 180) lists Neander's works as follows:

1. Two Latin grammars.
2. De re poetica Graecorum, libri quatuor. E nationibus M. Neandri praeceptoris sui collecti Opera J. Vollandi. Editio secunda. 1592.
3. Catechesis M. Lutheri Graeco-Latina. Patrum Theologorum Graecorum sententiae. Apocrypha: hoc est, narrationes de Christo, etc., extra Biblia. Basilae, per Joh. Oporinum. 1563.
4. Compendium Dialecticae ad Rhetoricae. 1581.
5. Orbis Terrae Partum succinta explicatio. 1586.
6. Orbis Terrae divisio compendaria, in usum studiosae juvenutis in schola Ilfeldensi. 1586.
7. Mankind's Mirror. Nuremberg, 1620.
8. Theologia megalandri Lutheri. Eisleben, 1587.
9. Advice to a good nobleman and friend; or, how to guide and instruct a boy. Eisleben, 1590. "This is an incomparable little book."

together with a course of reading so wide that much of it must have been covered superficially. In the sixteenth year Hebrew was begun, and in the two following years the elements of logic and rhetoric. The course was completed with an introduction to physics, history and geography. This was, indeed, a fresh and full curriculum when compared with the strict Latinity of most other schools. Neander's history text surveyed the history of the world from Adam to 1575 in forty pages, with chapters devoted to Jews, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans; the Period of the Migration of Races, ending with Charlemagne; Mohammed, and the Saracens; Argonautae, or the Crusades, Tartars and Turks; concluding with a section on the prophecies of Daniel. The geography text lists sources of information, plunges into the mathematics of geography in which the manner of the sun's revolution about the earth is explained, gives a short history of science, and describes Europe, Asia, Africa, and the oceans and islands. Among the latter America is listed.³⁰ Neander was a chemist and physician, and practiced medicine upon his pupils. He was said to have gathered seventy-two species of wild grasses in the neighborhood of Ilfeld and carefully pressed them between the leaves of "an old and huge monkish missal." Neander married, and had a family of two sons and two daughters. He further exhibited his independence by taking sole charge of the school at Ilfeld for forty-five years,

³⁰ von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 186 f.

never employing a colleague. To his geography text he appended a long list of the good scholars he had trained at Ilfeld, but remarked that he had also had some very bad ones, and gives the history of one of these, whose career ended with beheading.

Michael Neander's career of minor rebellion began when he was a boy in his home town of Sorau. His father, Hans Neuman, had destined his son to be a tradesman, and, determined that he would lose no time in making him a good horseman, he put the boy upon a horse without a saddle and commanded him to ride to the river for water. When he reached the banks, his mount threw him into the river, and he was saved from drowning by some chance bystanders who lifted him to the back of the restive animal and started him homeward. As he rode in at the gate, a stone was thrown at him which cut his head and covered his face with blood, and thus dampened and bleeding he returned home. But his father, a rough teacher, ordered him to mount a more spirited horse which promptly threw him to the ground, breaking his arm. When his mother sought to care for him his father bellowed, "To a cloister with you; you are of no use to anybody." In one afternoon of mishaps his destiny had been changed from business to scholarship, and his lifelong attitude from meek obedience to moderate rebellion.

Heinrich Theodore, rector at Sorau, became his first teacher, but in 1542, at seventeen years of age, he enrolled at Wittenberg University.

Although at that time I was quite young, I yet listened attentively for three years to Luther's lectures and sermons, and many of his excellent thoughts I wrote down with care, nor shall I ever forget them so long as my life lasts; for I often recall them with delight, in sorrow and affliction they are my consolation, and they aid me, moreover, in my labors both with old and young.³¹

In 1547, fresh from the University of Wittenberg where grammar and syntax were regarded as "insignificant trifles," he was appointed assistant at the city-school of Nordhausen, and given the task of teaching the advanced syntax, majo rem Syntaxian majoribus, which he had never studied, or even seen before. Three years later he was made rector of the cloister-school at Ilfeld, the abbot of which had just become Protestant, and that year taught twelve students. Nine years later he commanded over forty, and Melanchthon thought that the school at Ilfeld was the best in the country, "by reason of the faithful labors of Neander." A pupil who later became famous as a professor at Wittenberg under the name of Rhodemannus is reported to have said:

Neander has proved himself an exceedingly skillfull and successful teacher. He has carried scholars forward, within the space of three or four years, so fast in the languages and the arts and grounded them so thoroughly in catechetics, that, when he has done with them, they were fitted to enter at once upon important posts, whether in the school or in the church. Especially have they been so thoroughly drilled in the three languages that they have not inelegantly imitated the Greek classics.³²

³¹Quoted by von Haumer (op. cit., p. 181), whose information comes chiefly from Events in the Life of Michael Neander: A Contribution to the Religious and Social History of the Sixteenth Century, by W. Havemann, professor of history at Tübingen.

³²von Haumer, op. cit., pp. 183 f.

Another pupil wrote of his master: "Heander's boys on entering the university, have at once taken precedence of most others."³³

C. John Sturm

Even with his native independence and originality, Heander's school at Ilfeld bore the unmistakable marks of Protestant Latinity. John Sturm, who for forty-five years administered the famous Latin school at Strassburg, was a wholehearted advocate of current educational notions. The Strassburg school, by virtue of its exceptional quality as a school of this type, affords a discouraging suggestion of the kind of work done by ordinary schools of the same kind.

Sturm was one of the best classical scholars and most competent schoolteachers of his time. He was born at Schleiden, in the Riffel, near Cologne, in 1507, where his father was a steward to Count Mandersheid, with whose sons John was given his grammar school training. His Latin training was with the Brethren of the Common Life at Liege, and his university education was taken at the University of Louvain. After graduation and the required years of teaching at the university, he formed a partnership with the Greek professor and set up a printing press from which Homer and other classics were issued. In 1529 Sturm moved to Paris with a supply of these books, and while living on the profit of their sale

³³von Raumer, op. cit., p. 184.

studied medicine at the university. Soon he was giving private lectures on the Greek and Roman classics to students from Germany, England and Italy, and in addition to achieving a wide reputation as a scholar and teacher, was married, and began correspondence with Erasmus, Melanchthon and Bucer. Sturm moved to Strassburg in 1537, and in the next year published his influential work The Best Mode of Opening Institutions of Learning, the basic plan of which was developed at Strassburg and preserved through the letters he wrote to teachers of the various classes in his school in 1564, and an account published in 1578 of the examinations conducted in the school. On December 7, 1581, John Sturm was relieved of the rectorship of the Strassburg School which he had made famous, "on account of his advanced age," and because he had become involved in a religious dispute in which he held a distinctly minority position.³⁴

John Sturm died in 1589, almost blind from long study, weakened by age and devoted labor at the school, almost penniless. Thousands of scholars had passed through his school at Strassburg, and had become teachers in unnumbered villages throughout Europe. In 1578 two hundred noblemen, twenty-four counts and three princes were enrolled in his classes, and students came to him from Portugal, Poland, Denmark, France and England.³⁵ He personally organized the schools at

³⁴von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 211 f.

³⁵Ibid., p. 237.

Lauringen, Transback, and Hornback, students planned the Augsburg and Meminger schools, his principles were embodied in the influential School Code of Wurtemberg in 1559, in that of Saxony in 1580, and in the educational system of the Jesuits.

"The end to be accomplished by teaching is three-fold," said Sturm, "embracing piety, knowledge and the art of speaking."

A wise and persuasive piety should be the aim of our studies. But were all pious, then the student should be distinguished from him who is unlettered by scientific culture and eloquence. Hence, knowledge and purity and elegance of diction should become the aim of scholarship, and toward its attainment both teachers and pupils should sedulously bend their every effort.³⁶

Sturm's plan for achieving this classical end was a thoroughgoing training in Latin as a broad base, with the ancient classics and Greek as superstructure. The plan was as firm and unimaginative as the end in view. Boys were to be left with their mothers for the first six or seven years of life, but from that time on were to be subjected to a rigid Latinity; the school education proper was planned to occupy nine years, and after he was sixteen the boy could enter a more informal course which would last for five more years. Of the nine years in the gymnasium school, seven were assigned to a thorough mastery of pure, idiomatic Latin, and the two that remained to the achievement of an "elegant style"; the five years of postgraduate work were devoted to "readiness

³⁶ von Baumer, op. cit., p. 215.

and propriety" of speech. This was the basic plan of 1537; after twenty-seven years the curriculum remained unchanged with the minor exception that ten classes rather than nine were required to accomplish the material. The Classic Letters of 1564 show that the basic plan was being followed with dogged literalness. In 1578 the general examination was recorded with the faithful minuteness of a protocol: the basic plan still remained unaltered. Sturm had laid down a well marked and distinct aim at the beginning of his career at Strassburg, and he advanced toward that aim through forty-five years with an iron will. If the boys at Strassburg failed to learn Latin it was no fault of John Sturm.

Sturm counselled the teacher of his Tenth Class in 1564 to teach nothing but Latin with the single exception of the German catechism; if the catechism were committed to memory in German, then the Latin translation would be a "mere matter of rote." The teacher of the Ninth Class was instructed to give students a few words a day to commit to memory, and to take care that the words were not chosen at random but "in their natal grounds, as organic systems, each formed upon a distinct and separate idea." The students in the Strassburg school were under severe handicaps in learning Latin, especially when compared to the happy Roman children who "prattled in Latin on their mother's breast," and learned new words daily from nurses, household servants and "daily intercourse with companions." "This evil must be removed by the diligent effort of the Teacher," Sturm pointed out, "and in the way I

have indicated." In the Eighth Class, Sturm directed that students begin to make dictionaries, "and enter therein all the common and necessary words under distinct heads; such heads, for instance, as the following: the whole and its parts, friendship and enmity, cause and effect." On Sundays the Seventh Class was to receive instruction in the catechism, and translate the German catechism into classical Latin, using "such words alone excepted as have been authorized by the church, as Trinitas, sacramentum, baptismus," and other technical expressions which would unavoidably not be a part of the classical vocabulary. The Sixth Class devoted both Saturday and Sunday to the catechism and some of the mystico-religious letters of Gerard Groote, and began Greek, while the Fifth Class went into mythology and the shorter Pauline epistles, side by side. The Fourth, Third and Second Classes devoted themselves to the development of classical style in Latin, and were introduced to logic and rhetoric. Striking passages from the classics were to appear in their copybooks, and they should master these phrases for conversational use, and the Tenth Class began Aristotle and astronomy, and were expected to be able to expose the fallacy of such sophisms as: "He who has five fingers on one of his hands, also has three, and two, and has five likewise. But, he who has three, two, and five, has ten. Whoever, therefore, has five fingers on one of his hands has ten on the same hand."³⁷ Through the

³⁷ von Raumer, op. cit., pp. 217-33.

entire curriculum the student was to be guided by the firm will and superior intelligence of the teacher:

In these classes the boys must be kept under the discipline of the rod, nor should they learn according to their own choice, but after the good pleasure of the teacher. But when they leave the classes, then they go as their inclination prompts them, some to the theologians, for the sake of religion, some to naturalists, etc.³⁸

For a few years Sturm also attempted to provide for the five graduate years of education through his school at Strassburg, but with short-lived and scanty success. His plan for the so-called "college" was based on the assumptions, aim and method of the Latin School; the staff was not large enough, the curriculum only a continuation of the subject matter covered in the ten secondary school classes, and the method of teaching failed to challenge the minds of older boys and young men. Sturm lamented the lack of discipline in the college, and was astonished that the lectures on poets, historians and orators were wholly unattended. The college died a natural death, for the Latin principle of the secondary school could not be extended beyond ten years without collapsing of its own weight.

John Sturm's method, which was representative of much of the better teaching given in sixteenth century Germany, was devoted to a knowledge of words rather than things. The boys learned the Latin words for every possible object about them in the school, garden, schoolroom and church, and

³⁸ von Reumer, op. cit., p. 233.

the encyclopedia of expressions they each kept was simply for the purpose of fixing names and words in the boyish mind. Boys were admitted to the school at six or seven years of age, but in the directions that Sturm gave to his teachers there is not a suggestion of any special instruction in reading and writing German correctly; if they did not learn written German before they were seven, one wonders where the boys picked up the knowledge of their own language. No instruction in arithmetic was given in the first eight years, and the "arithmetic and elements of astronomy" in the upper classes were introduced only shortly before 1569. In 1578 arithmetic was being taught in the Second Class, and a few problems from the first book of Euclid in the highest class. In that year the annual revolution of the sun about the earth was taught, and no mention made of the Copernican system, which had appeared in 1543. No geography was offered either in school or college, and the only history course at Strassburg was an interpretation of Tacitus open to college students. With no instruction in the German language, mathematics, geography, natural history or science, Hebrew or contemporary languages, it would seem that most of the time and energy of the Strassburg scholar were concentrated upon the acquisition of Greek and Latin. All conversation in German was strictly forbidden, and games were permitted on the school grounds only on the condition that Latin alone should be spoken in them. The devotion to the Latin classics was so great that the moral implications of the memorization and acting of the

licentious plays of Terence were overlooked in favor of the splendid Latin instruction such activities offered.

If the curriculum did not achieve sterility of thought, the method of teaching it did. Latin style was to be mastered by culling out phrases from the ancient masters to be pieced together in the hope that young Germans might equal the ancient masters. Sturm directed that when the teacher gave out themes for composition he was not only to "draw attention to those points where imitation is desirable," but also to show how "similarity can be concealed by a superadded variation."³⁹ By this deliberate concealment of imitation Sturm apparently actually hoped that his boys would achieve the hoped for culture of the ancients; when the ethical implications of the process occurred to him, he could dismiss them with a sophism as transparent as those Luther had rebelled against. "This is not plagiarism," said Sturm, "because the phrases come from our memory, which is our own." The concealment of this secondhanded borrowing was to be accomplished in three ways: "by adding, by taking away, or by alteration." "I hope to see the men of the present age," said Sturm, "in their writing, commenting, haranguing, and speaking, not merely followers of the old masters, but equal to those who flourished in the noblest age of Athens or Rome."⁴⁰

³⁹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 246.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 248.

D. Wurtemberg and Saxony School Codes

Sturm's method, which carried Melancthon's classicism to an ultimate expression without the moderating influence of Melancthon's central ethical concern, influenced the School Code promulgated by Duke Christopher for Wurtemberg in 1559, and that of Elektor Augustus I of Saxony in 1580. The curriculum of Strassburg, with grammar in the lower classes, logic and rhetoric in the upper, Cicero the patron saint of all learning, Terence and Plautus acted out by the students, arithmetic largely neglected and history and geography completely omitted, is the model for these later and important school plans. In Wurtemberg the teachers were instructed to make everyone Latin scholars, and that those who "from natural backwardness are unable to pronounce all the letters, should be, as much as possible, practiced upon words of a smooth and gliding accent."⁴¹ Instructors were cautioned to use the "various vices" portrayed in the Terence plays as an opportunity for positive moral teaching, and students were strictly forbidden to converse in German at the school. In grading the weekly compositions the teacher is instructed to "strike out every phrase which is not sanctioned by some approved author," and then he should read to the boys a composition on the same theme which he himself has prepared so that the boys may see "how skillfully the preceptor has joined together

⁴¹von Raumer, op. cit., p. 255.

these phrases."⁴² The Saxony Code borrowed great portions of the Wurttemberg Code word for word, and throughout maintained a striking similarity to the earlier plan. Everything presented to the students in the schools must be carefully censored for content and style, and pastors were urged to be alert lest the cantors, who teach music, introduce any new compositions. Only the music of the "learned and worthy old masters as Josquin, Clement [not the pope], Orlandus and the like" is to be sung, and "all airs of a light and lascivious character" are to be avoided, "for all the music chosen ought to be solemn, noble, and inspiring, so that the people may be charmed into a devout and Christian frame of mind."⁴³ In submitting Terence to the boys, teachers must "separate the poison from the honey," and instruct their pupils "carefully to avoid and eschew the vices which these poets have depicted both in young men and old."⁴⁴

The schools of Germany, literally called into being by the cry of appeal from Martin Luther to the cities of Germany in order to preserve the benefits of the New Theology for another generation, had become a prison house for the spirit. The freedom of the individual promised by the Protestant revolt was seldom realized in the schools, which had been created for the purpose of eliminating radicalism and guaranteeing orthodoxy. The theory that the individual was to determine his beliefs and his conduct through his own

⁴²von Raumer, op. cit., p. 258.

⁴³Ibid., p. 261.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 262.

interpretation of the Scriptures did not work out in practice, and rather than giving men a basis for sound moral judgment, the schools seemed determined to supply the student only with a deadeningly thorough Latin education which was a foundation for nothing except an esthetic appreciation of a civilization lived under different ethical standards and long dead. The church had planned to guide the individual in his thinking and beliefs through the school, but Melancthon's plan of guidance easily became domination. Children were taught not how to think, but what to think. Religious indoctrination became the method of the schools, and cultural irrelevance the purpose of education.

E. Schools of the Jesuits

The educational methods worked out by Melancthon and Sturm were exactly suited to their aims, and provided a system of training so thorough that when the Society of Jesus was entrusted by Pope Paul III in 1540 with the responsibility of strengthening the hold of Catholic doctrine upon the children of an age of divided religious loyalties, the Jesuits developed an educational plan remarkably similar to the system of educational indoctrination administered by John Sturm at Straassburg. Sturm himself reported his surprise in discovering that the Jesuits had evolved a plan so much like his own.

Ignatius de Loyola⁴⁵ was commissioned by the Roman

⁴⁵ 1491-1556.

church for the express purpose of waging a two-fold campaign to convert the heathen and combat Protestantism. For the accomplishment of the second aim, Loyola and his newly recognized order proposed to enter upon missionary efforts to win back lost Protestant territories, and by means of schools to hold converts and educate all peoples to Catholic orthodoxy. Protestant education was to be directly counteracted by the establishment of equally good or better Catholic facilities. Loyola had been a soldier, and he had not begun his formal education until he entered a grammar school in Barcelona at thirty-three years of age, and he poured all his personal background and experience into a devotion to the supremacy of the church and its organization. In 1534, while studying at Paris, he persuaded six fellow students to join him in devoting themselves to missionary work and to maintaining the authority of the pope,⁴⁶ but it was only over considerable opposition that the new Societas Jesu was officially recognized. A constitution, drafted by Loyola with the aid of Diego Laynez in the sixteen years after the order was founded and published two years after Loyola's death, contained specific provisions for the establishment and administration of schools. In 1599 the Method and System of Studies of the Society of Jesus⁴⁷ was officially published, summing up the experience of sixty years of school activity and preserving

⁴⁶Francisco de Xavier, Laynez, Bobadilla, Faber, Salmeron, Rodriguez.

⁴⁷Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu.

the record of the educational methods developed by the Counter-Reformation of the Catholic church during the same years in which John Sturm was working out a teaching system for Reformed orthodoxy. Loyola poured his background of military discipline and his soldier's love of authority into the organization of the order and the plan for its schools. The order was given a thoroughly military organization, and in the schools there was insistence upon absolute authority and the suppression of individuality. Teachers were observed in their classrooms at least once every two weeks by the officer in charge of studies,⁴⁸ it was carefully prescribed that no new questions on any important subject, nor an opinion without sufficient authority, should be introduced without permission of the school administration,⁴⁹ and to this end teachers were thoroughly prepared for their teaching position in Jesuit academies and seminaries.

Though the Jesuit system probably solidified itself in general independence of the Sturm influence, the resemblance between the two methods of indoctrination is striking: apparently the system represented the ultimate achievement of the sixteenth century mind in educational control. The Jesuits accepted the humanistic curriculum in all its schools, grammar, high school and college. As in Sturm's school the

⁴⁸Robert Henry Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Company, 1874), p. 5.

⁴⁹Frank Pierrepont Graves, A History of Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), p. 218.

work in the grammar school centered about the cultivation of a mastery of Latin style, though instead of dividing the course into nine or ten grades of one year each, the Jesuits generally maintained five classes, the highest of which normally required two years for completion. Later in many instances this division was increased to eight classes.⁵⁰ Like the school at Strassburg, the Jesuit schools assumed that the boys knew how to read and write their native tongue when they entered school, and the Infirma, first class of the Studia Inferiora, was devoted to a mastery of the rudiments of Latin grammar. In later years the Small Catechism of Peter Canisius was added to the instruction of this class. The Media class ventured further into Latin grammar, and began to read Cicero, Ovid, and Aesop, and the Suprema finished Latin grammar and continued to read the classics. Class Four, the Humanitas, continued Latin as a preparation for rhetoric, read Cicero, Virgil, Horace and some of the church fathers, and in the last class of two years, the Rhetorica, the boys were required to achieve "perfect eloquence" and begin Aristotle and Quintilian. After the grammar school, boys advanced to a three year course in the philosophical school where they studied mathematics, logic, metaphysics, ethics and physics. Upon graduation they were required to spend six years in teaching lower classes, and following that practical experience, they were permitted to advance to the theological studies.

⁵⁰Robert Schwickerath, Jesuit Education (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1903), pp. 118 ff.

In the actual classroom method, the resemblance between the Catholic and Protestant systems of indoctrination remained strong. As Sturm has stressed repeated reviews and formal examinations, so did the Jesuits. In Jesuit schools each day began with review of the previous day's work and closed with a review of the progress of that day.⁵¹ Saturday of each week was given to review, as well as the last month of each year, and in the lowest three classes the second half of the year: the Jesuits were as determined as Sturm that their boys should learn the magic language of the humanists. Furthermore, most of the actual method of teaching was review: every passage the boys studied went through three phases of presentation after it had first been read, pronunciet, argumentum, and eruditio.⁵² The Ratio prescribed "a thorough study of a few lines,"⁵³ and provided that after a careful reading of the passage, the teacher gave a general explanation of the proposition, then advanced to a more detailed examination of the construction and phraseology. After that he reread the passage, commenting on the occurrence of similar thoughts or expressions in the works of authors already read by the class, giving in addition general information about the environment out of which the author had written. When this was completed, the teacher reread the passage, studying the rhetorical figures and examining rhythm. A

⁵¹Schwickerath, op. cit., p. 497, 2nd rule of the Ratio.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 458-75.

⁵³Ibid., p. 483.

final review pointed out the moral implications.⁵⁴ In order to make this kind of concentration possible, the Jesuit schools provided one day of vacation each week, and short morning and afternoon sessions. The work did not progress rapidly, but it was thoroughly learned, and there was little opportunity for questioning or original thought.

Much like the school at Strassburg, the Jesuit schools organized each class into "squads" of ten boys and put a decurion in command of each group. On Saturday mornings while the teacher was correcting the written work of the class, this student leader conducted the weekly review for his quiz-section.⁵⁵ These themes, like those assigned by Sturm, were to be drawn from the classics and were not expected to indicate originality: "It ought to be directed as far as possible, to the imitation of Cicero," is the statement of the Thirtieth Rule of the Ratio,⁵⁶ and the teacher of the Humanitas is told, "It is often advantageous so to compose the theme that the whole may be gathered here and there from the passages already explained."⁵⁷ After the themes were corrected, the teacher called each student forward and read his theme to the class, pointing out the corrections to be made in the manuscript. Often a personal critic was appointed

⁵⁴Schwickerath, op. cit., p. 496: from the Ratio, "pluribus diebus fere singula praecepta inculcanda sunt."

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 515.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 500.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 500 f.

who attacked his opponent's paper. When this process had been completed, the rest of Saturday was given to a general disputation by sides, pitting the boys of Rome against the team of Carthage in academic debate. Moral instruction was accomplished by example and emulation, according to the theory of the Ratio, and by prescribed attendance at daily mass, prayers before and after each lesson, and formal study of religious beliefs. "There is no greater and at the same time more subtle teacher," writes a contemporary Jesuit, "than imitation."⁵⁸

To the older monastic orders of the Middle Ages, the school had always been an institution of secondary importance, but in the century of the Reformation the Catholic Church gave birth to the Society of Jesus, for whom the school was the chief means of accomplishing the extension and fixation of the Catholic faith. It was precisely the same motive that stirred Protestant educational leaders. Neither party was interested in school or education merely for its own sake, they set up no new standards of liberal education but simply adopted the arid cultural curriculum of the humanists and by intensive methods rendered it completely sterile of creativity and originality. Independence of mind, love of truth, the search for new discoveries, and the ability of judgment were not merely neglected, but positively suppressed. It is bitterly ironic that the two religious systems of the sixteenth

⁵⁸Pierre J. Marique, History of Christian Education (New York: Fordham University Press, 1926), Vol. II, p. 148.

century, standing for diametrically opposed concepts of man, his salvation and relation to God, had come to complete agreement in their highly efficient plan for fastening orthodoxy upon the minds of the young.

* * * * *

Thus it was that within two generations of the years that Martin Luther cried out for freedom of thought and universality of education, and within the lifetime of Melancthon himself, the schools of Germany had sunk back into the excessive formalism and severe intellectual control that had made the schoolroom of Luther's childhood a place of gloom and even terror for the children. Some new forms had been developed, and a new worship of the ancient classics had been raised, but the principle of domination remained. Throughout the scale of learning, grammar school, Latin school and university, pure doctrine and linguistic learning were the sole aims. Precepta, exempla and imitatio became the method of pedagogy: rules were presented in grammar, rhetoric and logic; models of style were found in reading the classic authors; imitation was the only trustworthy guide in thought content as well as in style. Only such authors were read whose diction it was considered safe to imitate, and in the reading the interest was centered not on the content but on the form. The pupils noted and collected in their copybooks all the expressions, idioms, phrases, aphorisms, tropes and metaphors they could find, for the purpose of stringing them together in their

own compositions. The students were strictly forbidden to speak German at school, and in so far as possible they were encouraged to use only Latin in their daily conversation. Those who went on to higher levels of learning might attempt Greek, and read some of the Scriptures in Greek, but almost exclusively the epistles of Paul from which the evangelical theology was formally drawn.

In the area of religious instruction the aphorism of Luther that it is easier to make sinners pious than to tame old rams became the principle of teaching. It was considered essential that men should be imbued with the true doctrine from childhood, and every student committed to memory, and in most cases only to memory, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and the Short Catechism. The whole school was required to be present at every divine service.

The only science learned in these schools was that of rhetoric and dialectics, where the invention or production of ideas, and disposition or the style of their arrangement, were the chief aims. Natural science, observation, and practical improvements for daily living were all unknown. Music was the chief cultural contribution of the Reformation to the curricula of the schools, and its principal outlines remained unaltered until the great educational reforms at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Throughout the life of the student the most important lesson he learned was to obey. In the lower classes the lesson was frequently enforced with the rod. There was no

school in which it was not wielded every day, not only for misconduct, but for forgetfulness and incapacity. No real change took place until the nineteenth century: obedience in thought and action, in content as well as form, was the lesson that the sixteenth century had to teach her young, whether Catholic or Protestant. Indeed, learning itself became a kind of obedience.

Year after year through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the children of Germany were herded, whether they willed it or not, through the unvarying routine of grammar, Cicero and dialectic. Methods of teaching became more rigid, discipline more harsh, and the divorce of the life of the school from the life of the world more complete than ever before. The idea of the total depravity of mankind had an especially oppressive effect upon the teacher: nothing but corrupt offspring can be expected, and the morals of pupils are bad and are not to be mended. Misdirected energy, stupid routine and narrowmindedness effectively robbed the world of the fruits of the creative insights of Martin Luther for three hundred years.

The schools that had come into existence for the purpose of preserving the Reformation had subtly channeled its ethical implications into irrelevance, and slowly throttled its keen religious sensitiveness into limp orthodoxy. The recreation of mind, heart and spirit suggested by Martin Luther at the beginning of the Reformation and the redirection of school, society and church that were implied by the

New Theology had not come to pass. By the nature of the time in which they lived, the people as well as Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon themselves were unprepared either to understand or accept the impact of total religious, intellectual and social reorientation implicit in the evangelical principle. Indeed, the new intellectual day, without which the principle of religious freedom cannot safely operate, is just now beginning to dawn. Perhaps, then, the day is upon us in which to face again the religious implications of the nascent Reformation which were so quickly overshadowed and even as men were adjusting their vision to the blazing light of Reformation insight passed into near-total eclipse. Perhaps now is the time for the consummation of the evangelical Reformation.

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